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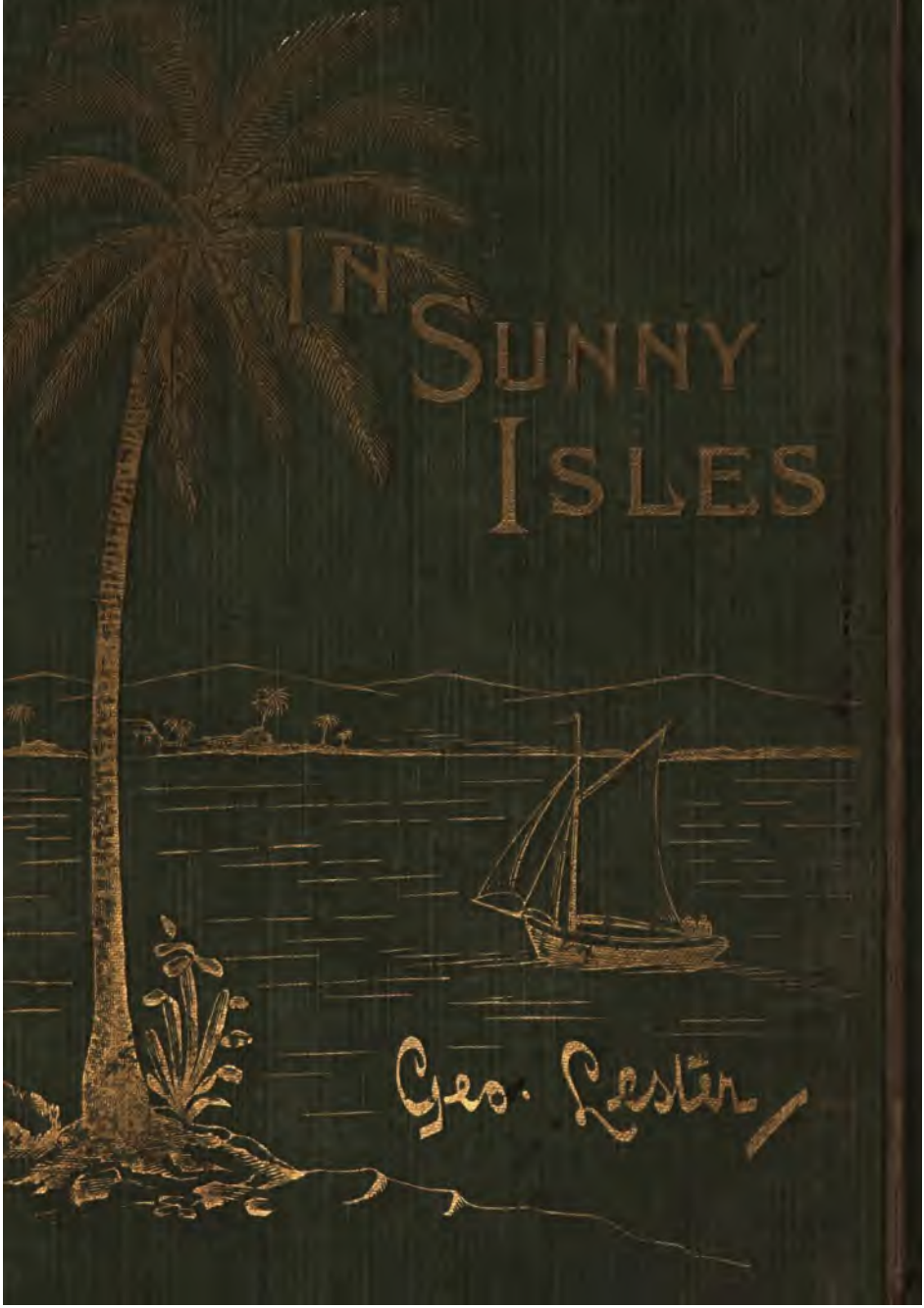
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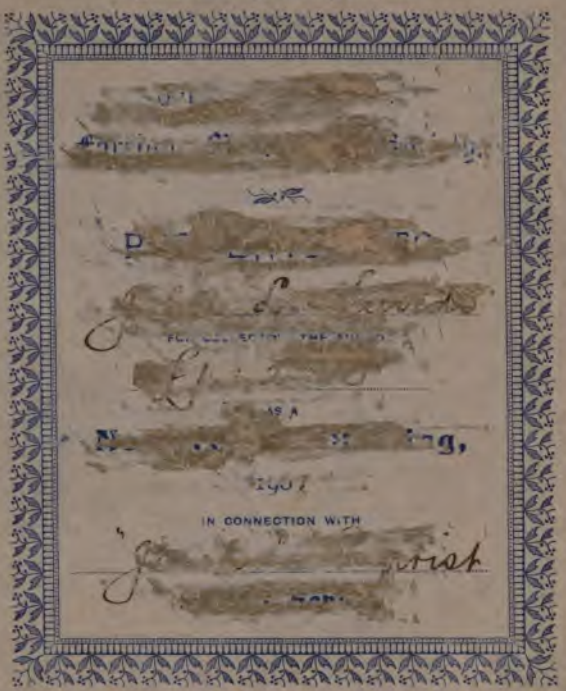
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In Sunny Isles



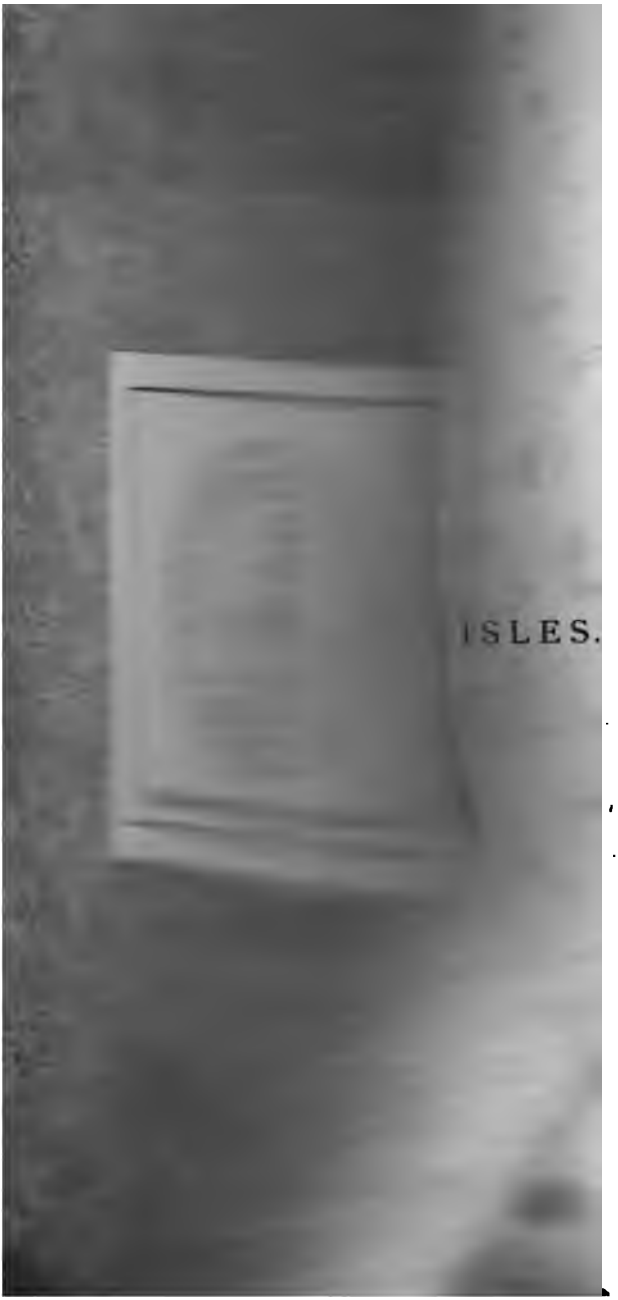
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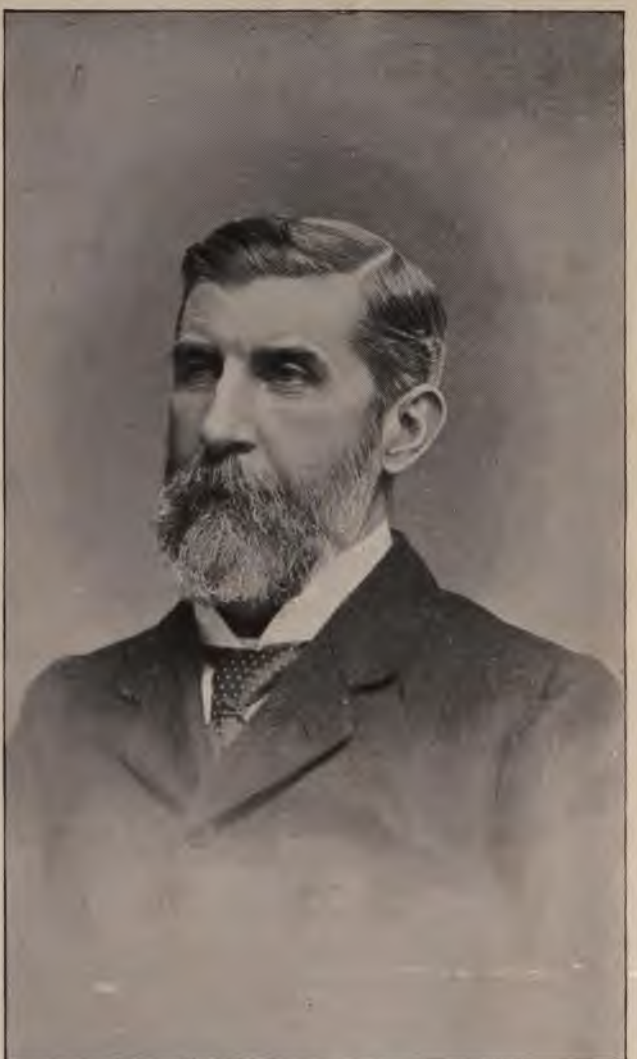
And Jesus said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.



IN CONNECTION WITH

And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following.


ISLES.



HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR OF THE BAHAMAS,
SIR W. F. HAYNES-SMITH, K.C.M.G.

(*Frontispiece.*

IN SUNNY ISLES:

CHAPTERS TREATING CHIEFLY OF THE BAHAMA ISLANDS AND CUBA.

BY

GEORGE LESTER.

AUTHOR OF "LORD TENNYSON AND THE BIBLE," "GRIMSBY METHODISM," "THE SACRED FEAST," ETC.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE BY BISHOP R. K. HARGROVE.

"How oft we saw the Sun retire,
And burn the threshold of the night,
Fall from his Ocean-lane of fire,
And sleep beneath his pillar'd light!
How oft the purple-skirted robe
Of twilight slowly downward drawn,
As thro' the slumber of the globe
Again we dash'd into the dawn!"

London:

CHARLES H. KELLY, 2, CASTLE ST., CITY ROAD, E.C.;

66, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

ROCHDALE: "JOYFUL NEWS" BOOK DEPÔT.

1897.



THE GREAT SEAL OF THE BAHAMA ISLANDS.

"*Expulsis piratis, Restituta commercia.*"

[*To face p.* v.

[By permission.]

TO

HIS EXCELLENCY

SIR W. F. HAYNES-SMITH,

K.C.M.G.,

GOVERNOR OF THE BAHAMA ISLANDS.

PREFACE.

THE year 1900 will mark the Centenary of the commencement of the Wesleyan-Methodist Mission in the Bahamas, and arrangements are already in progress for the due celebration of that interesting event. The present time may therefore be regarded as opportune for presenting some account of the introduction and development of the mission in these islands of the western tropics.

During the six years of my residence in the colony my life was quite too busy and "knock-about" to assist to that elegance of literary style in the preparation of this volume which an author might honourably covet to achieve; but an honest attempt to be accurate as to matters of fact has at least been made.

In the first section a self-imposed restraint was exercised, remembering that the prime object of this

volume was not to supply extensive information respecting the colony. As to the second section, a detailed account of Methodist work in the several islands of the group and in each particular settlement—even if that were possible—would be too much a repetition of the story of Methodist toils and triumphs all the world over to be either entertaining or serviceable. If these pages contain little or no reference to the enterprize and successes of other Churches, the silence is not to be interpreted as indicating a lack of appreciation on my part of the self-denying and valuable labours of men and women of the Anglican, Presbyterian, and Baptist Communions. All of them have contributed in no small degree to the betterment of the community. The chapters on Cuba were written, for the most part, before the revolt against Spanish domination had assumed its present dimensions. The "Memorials of my Ministry" would not have been included had not some who heard the words spoken expressed the wish to read them also, and had it not been that they indicate certain phases of religious thought and enterprize which pertain to the writer's sojourn in these sunny isles.

The lists which form "Appendix C" are not put forward as being exhaustive, and the compiler invites

contributions from any who, like himself, recognise the utility of a complete and accurate bibliography.

The illustrations have been prepared chiefly from photographs obtained from Mr. J. F. Coonley.

Grateful acknowledgment is due, and is heartily tendered to His Excellency the Governor of the Bahama Islands, Sir W. F. Haynes-Smith, K.C.M.G., for his courtesy and assistance; to Bishop Hargrove and the Rev. John J. Tigert, L.L.D., of Nashville, Tennessee; to the Rev. F. W. Macdonald of London, editor of *Work and Workers*; and to those members of my own household who have so cheerfully lightened my labours by their timely help.

GEO. LESTER.

WESLEY HOUSE, TRURO.
December, 1897.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

BY

BISHOP HARGROVE,

OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SOUTH.

IT has not been my good fortune to visit the Bahama Islands, but it has been my pleasure to make the acquaintance of the author of "In Sunny Isles," and to examine the manuscript.

The proximity of the Bahamas to the American Continent, the story of missionary toils and successes in these islands of the western tropics, and the fact that Methodism all the world over is essentially one, entitles me to speak sympathetically of the author's aim and purpose in placing upon record the story of work done for Christ in this interesting group. In the preparation of this volume Mr. Lester has done his work with that care and accuracy which characterise all his literary performances, and in a style which, in my judgment, cannot fail to engage the attention of readers on both sides of the Atlantic.

R. K. HARGROVE.

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE.

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IN SUNNY ISLES.

I.

THE BAHAMAS DESCRIBED.

IT was one of the Bahama Islands, then known as the Lucayas, that witnessed "the land-fall of Columbus" on October 12th, 1492. Opinion is divided upon the question whether the island now known as Watlings, or that other locally known as "Cat Island," is the Guanahani of Columbus, to which he gave the name of San Salvador. Sir Henry Blake—sometime Governor of the Bahamas, and now of Jamaica, himself a careful student of the history and traditions of these islands—has recently discussed this question in the *Nineteenth Century*.

"When the Bahama Islands were discovered by Columbus, they were inhabited by Indians belonging to the same race as those who were found in Cuba, Hispaniola, and Jamaica; a people of mild and simple character and habits, very different from

the ferocious and warlike savages who had possession of the groups called the Windward Islands. These Carib Indians, who treated Columbus and his Spanish companions with the greatest kindness and liberality, were soon exterminated by the cruelty of the Spaniards, whose wickedness and barbarity has scarcely any parallel in history. They forced the Indians away from their homes, and either worked them to death in the mines and fields of Hispaniola, or murdered them by thousands, under the pretence of converting them to the faith of Christianity. Large numbers were put to death in honour of the apostles; and many were shot to death with arrows, or torn in pieces by bloodhounds, to make sport for their persecutors."

For many years the islands lay waste; then, were settled by white immigrants, who became the prey of buccaneers, until eventually order and good government were established by British authority.

The Bahama Islands, though tolerably well known to Americans, either as a winter resort, or commercially, are to the average Englishman a *terra incognita.* Their discovery and early history are better known than is their present condition.

A few books and numerous magazine articles on the Bahamas have appeared in America, but scarcely any in England. Mr. Froude does not so much as mention the Bahamas in his "English in the West Indies," and Charles Kingsley's "At Last" knows

nothing of them; how should it? since Trinidad —with which he mainly deals—is at least fifteen hundred miles from the centre of this group. An octavo of three hundred and twenty pages there certainly is, published by a London house; and no fault can be found with it on the score of smartness; but it is sometimes inaccurate, and is disfigured and rendered untrustworthy by violent prejudice. Lady Brassey devotes a delightful chapter or so of her "In the Trades, the Tropics, and the Roaring Forties" to the Bahamas. An occasional allusion to the islands may be traced in Longfellow's poems, as when he speaks of

> "In some far-off bright Azore,
> From Bahama and the dashing
> Silver-flashing
> Surges of San Salvador."

Lord Lytton translated Heine's poem on Bimini for the *Fortnightly*, little imagining, it may be supposed, how small a resemblance the wrecker's home on the Great Bahama Banks actually bears to the glowing picture-song of the romantic German.

Gazetteers and encyclopædias have an irritating fashion of presenting information. For example, to say that "The Bahamas lie between 21° 42′—27° 34′ N. lat. and 72° 40′—79° 5′ W. long.," is in effect to have said nothing at all to the generality of readers. It may be less precise, but it will be

more informing to say that the Bahamas lie as far westward from England as does New York, and as far to the south as do Calcutta and Canton. The most northerly island is at least six hundred miles from the southern extremity of the group, which lies within sight of the eastern end of Cuba, and within easy reach of Hayti.

A voyage from Green Turtle Cay in Abaco to Matthew Town in Inagua—points which mark the "Dan to Beersheba" of the colony—would require twice the time occupied in crossing the Atlantic in a Cunarder, even though winds were ever so favourable and connections in Nassau ever so well arranged. The schooners which ply between the out-islands and the chief town of the colony are craft varying from thirty to eighty tons, and are not of a kind to make "life on the ocean wave" an enviable experience. The only steam communication is a fortnightly service of mail steamers running between New York and the southern ports of Cuba, and calling at Nassau, except that latterly, during the visiting season, a southern service has been established between Nassau and Florida—an arrangement which has largely increased the number of visitors to these sunny islands of the western tropics.

Most of the islands are but small. Andros, the largest and least known, contains fully a third of the entire acreage of the group, whilst Spanish

Wells only boasts an area equal to a moderate-sized English farm. In this case, as in the case of Harbour Island, the lands from which the people derive a scanty subsistence lie on the neighbouring island of Eleuthera.

The Bahamas are all of coral limestone formation. "The sand of the seashore is made up of the triturated skeletons of corals and of echinoderms, the shells of mollusks, and the stony secretions of many other animals, and of algæ. It is washed over and over by water as pure as crystal, and bleached in the sun of unending summer until it becomes as white as snow." What are known as "Sea Gardens" are common. Lady Brassey thus describes one of these: "If you can picture to yourself the most beautiful of corals, madrepores, echini, seaweeds, sea-anemones, sea-lilies, and other fascinating marine objects, growing and flourishing under the sea, with fish darting about among them like the most gorgeous birds and butterflies conceivable, all in the clearest of water, which does not impede the vision in the least, and resting on a bottom of the smoothest white coral sand; if you still further imagine a magnificent blue sky overhead, and a bright sun shining out of it; even then you will have but a very faint idea of the marvellous beauty of the wonders of the sea on a coral-bank in the Bahamas. I had longed for years to behold such a sight, and I found now that the spectacle not

only equalled but far surpassed my most sanguine expectations."

It is customary to say that "about twenty of the islands of the Bahamas are inhabited." As a matter of fact about twice that number are inhabited; the governmental returns, which are prepared for registration purposes, group the cays—on which the people mostly reside—with the neighbouring islands, hence the discrepancy. Besides these islands, there are hundreds of islets, some of which may be purchased for a few dollars.

The houses are sometimes built of native stone, but are more frequently constructed of wood imported from America. Those of the coloured people are generally thatched with palm-leaves, in the manipulation of which considerable skill is exhibited. The old Africans are adepts in this kind of work.

The entire population of the islands, as shown in the census returns of 1891, amounts to 47,575, which is only equal to that of a moderate-sized English town. The net increase during the last decade was 4044. The whites constitute about one-fourth of the whole population. These are, for the most part, descendants of English settlers, many of whom came hither from America after the Declaration of Independence.

Degrees of colour are rarely recognised in the Bahamas. All who are not whites are known as

"Coloured People." Among these may be found every shade of colour, from that of the pure negro to that of such as hardly show indications of admixture of race. The Loyalists who came from the Carolinas and other Southern States brought with them their slaves; Africans were imported here in the days of the slave traffic; whilst a considerable number of negroes are persons who were rescued from slave ships by British gunboats, after the slave traffic had been declared unlawful. Local prejudice may somewhat affect the standing of the coloured people in the estimation of their white neighbours, but a perfect equality in all social and religious matters is recognised by the statutes of the colony, and is, in the main, acknowledged throughout the community. A few of the settlements in the islands are composed chiefly of white people; some (especially in the Windward Isles) are occupied by blacks exclusively; but, for the most part, the settlements are peopled by both races. African superstitions are still present and active amongst a large proportion of the people of colour; witchcraft, ceremonies over the dying and the dead, snatches of songs from "the Dark Continent," and social habits such as pertain to "the West Coast," are not infrequently met with. The moral and social status of the blacks of the Bahamas is admitted to be considerably higher than that of their brothers in the Southern States and in some of the West India

Islands, but there is yet both room and need for improvement in this regard.

The folk-lore of the Bahamas is mostly concerning animals, which, personified, have peculiar and ofttimes thrilling adventures. The popular stories deal with such subjects as "B' baracouti an' b' man," "B' parakeet an' b' frog," and "B' loggerhead an' b' conch," etc.[1]

Some of the negro proverbs and sayings are at once amusing and significant: e.g.—"Follow fashion break monkey neck," "Lizard no plant corn, but him hab plenty," "Dead hog no fear biling water." The following may be quoted as an instance of negro sentiment concerning petty larceny: "O Lord, de tief am bad, but when tief tieve from tief, him too much proboking." The genetic relation existing between the proverbs, tales, and music of the Bahama and Southern States negroes may be readily discerned.

The loyalty of the people to the throne and person of the Queen is unimpeachable. A short time since the organist of a certain church was playing the National Anthem. Two coloured boys happened to pass the church at the time. No sooner did their ears catch the familiar strain than, instantly, they pulled off their hats and stood uncovered until the tune was concluded. Touching

[1] The "B" of the Bahama negroes is a contraction of "Brer" as used in the Southern States.



NEGRO DWELLING, BAHAMAS.



DIAMOND JUBILEE, NASSAU. [*To face p.* 9.

their grievances—real or imaginary—they have been heard to say: "Wictoria don't know lots o' tings 'bout us poor people, else she wouldn't let tings be as dey is."

The rocky soil of the Bahamas is not favourable to agricultural pursuits, and frequent droughts cut short the hopes of many a planter. The chief implements of agriculture are the mattock, the hoe, the crowbar and the *machete*. The principal growths are pine-apples, Indian corn, sweet potatoes, yams, melons, tomatoes, and sugar canes. Many of the vegetables are such as grow on trees, viz.: bread fruit, papaw, plantain, etc. Citrus fruits of various kinds abound, as also the fruits common to tropical climes. The present governor, Sir W. F. Haynes-Smith, is assiduously promoting measures for the improvement of the agricultural interests of the colony. As an article of food fish is in great demand, and turtle such as would gladden the heart of a London alderman is often the food of even the poorest.

The sponge fishery is the most important and flourishing of Bahamian industries, and finds employment for a large number of men and boys. The value of sponges exported in one year has amounted to as much as £82,000. Occasionally, the precious pink pearl is obtained from the common conch, and on rare occasions ambergris is found upon the seashore.

Travelling is done chiefly by boats. From the day that one arrives in the Bahamas he bids adieu to railways, tramcars, and omnibuses. Nassau has good roads and an excellent supply of carriages, and up-to-date bicycles abound. As to the "Out-Islands," they are innocent of roads; what pass as such are little more than clearings cut through the bush—bridle-paths, so rocky and uneven as to test the endurance, skill, and nerve of the practised equestrian.

So uncertain are the winds, especially during the summer months, that it is customary to speak of a sea passage as a "chance." Several days are sometimes occupied by a journey which in England would be accomplished in a couple of hours.

The settlements (villages) of the Bahamas are, without exception, near the seashore, and every Bahamian knows how to manage a boat, and how to swim and dive into the bargain.

The shores and reefs are delightful to the conchologist and to the lover of corals. Algæ of delicious forms and colour abound on the reefs, and here also every variety of white stony and flexible coral may be discovered if only the hardihood of the enthusiast is equal to the occasion.

The loftiest land of the Bahamas is only two hundred and thirty feet above sea level; generally, the hills are under one hundred feet. Here and there are small brackish lakes, but there are no

fresh-water rivers or streams. From morning till evening the sky is clear, and glorious sunshine floods the whole landscape. The seascapes are magnificent; the Mediterranean itself can present no such marvellous colouring as may be observed amid those reef-bound islands of the western tropics.

In his "Birds of the Bahamas," C. B. Cory mentions one hundred and forty-nine different kinds, some of which are to be found only on certain islands of the group. The most remarkable of the birds frequently seen are the flamingo, the tobacco dove, the humming bird, the banana bird, man-o'-war bird, and engaging varieties of the finch tribe.

Flowers and ferns abound. Of the former, oleanders, begonias, lilies, amaryllis, jessamines, and roses are the most common, and flourish all the year through. Many of the trees and shrubs are flower-bearing—the royal ponciana produces large branches of gorgeous red blossom; the hibiscus displays a splendid bloom quite unknown to colder latitudes; whilst the bougainvillæa, the pride of the conservatory in Britain, vaunts its lovely sprays with a prodigal profusion.

The only settlement in the Bahamas worthy to be called a town is Nassau, where the governor resides, and other colonial officers. This place has for many years enjoyed a high reputation as a winter health resort, and is much frequented by Americans. Florida and even Cuba are occasionally

visited by frost, but here frost is unknown. The rainfall during the winter is light, and fruit and flowers abound the whole year through. No wonder that Nassau should have been styled "the invalid's paradise." Yellow fever never originates here, and the quarantine regulations are rigidly enforced.

But Nassau is not a desirable summer residence. From June to October the heat is considerable, and during the prevalence of winds from the south the climate is oppressive and enervating.

The little city is well supplied with churches, and successful mission work is carried on upon the out-islands. The Sabbath is well observed, and during the Day of Rest a sense of quiet reverence obtains.

Nassau has a good library, and a goodly number of diligent bookmen.

During the American Civil War, Nassau became the *entrepôt* of the blockade runners in the cotton ports of the Southern States; fortunes were rapidly made and in some cases as rapidly lost. On the whole, the excitement and speculation did the colony more harm than good; it fostered a spirit of romance, and put a check upon the steady growth of commercial enterprise. Interest in this exciting period has been revived by the recent publication (by Murray, London) of a volume entitled "Running the Blockade," by Thomas E. Taylor.

The public sentiment is decidedly British, and



A WINTER SCENE IN NASSAU.

[*To face p.* 12.

old English ways and manners prevail amongst the better-to-do classes of the community. Mails arrive, and are made up, once a fortnight, and telegraphic communication with the American continent has been established.

The longest day is about three hours shorter, and the shortest day about three hours longer than in England; there is only a very brief period of twilight. The moonlight nights are delightful, and the stars are brilliant to a degree that is unknown in "the home land."

The Government is vested in a Governor, aided by an Executive Council of nine members, a Legislative Council of nine, and a Representative Assembly of twenty-nine.

The public revenue for 1895, derived chiefly from duty on imports, amounted to £62,232; the public expenditure to £62,110. The imports of the year were valued at £172,581; the exports at £124,011. The commerce of the colony is carried on chiefly with the United States. The principal articles of export are sponge, live turtles and turtle shell, pine-apples, oranges, bananas, canned fruits, sisal fibre, cocoanuts, hard wood and dye woods, bark, sea-shells, and salt.

The marriage laws make the solemnisation of matrimony a simple and inexpensive function. The legislation, which is intended to regulate and restrict the sale of liquor, is in advance of public

sentiment, and is too often disregarded. The difficulty of buying and selling land is reduced to a minimum.

Public education is under the direction of a Board appointed annually by the governor. Education is free and compulsory. There are forty-two public schools, with six thousand three hundred and fifty-five pupils, under the Education Department, and there are several proprietary schools.

The Nassau Asylum is a public institution, which includes poor house, infirmary, dispensary, lunatic asylum, and leper house.

A Church Disestablishment and Disendowment Act was passed in 1869. The see of Nassau was formed in 1861; the jurisdiction of the bishop extends as far as Turks Islands.

Does any one imagine that the Bahamas are an earthly paradise? Let him dismiss the fancy. There are drawbacks; some of them serious and inevitable. But there is nowhere the pinching poverty which is only too well known to great cities in the rigours of a northern winter, nor the caste distinctions which too often make social life in some countries a mixture of farce and of irony.



VIEW FROM CATHEDRAL TOWER, NASSAU.

[*To face p.* 14.

II.

THE STORY OF A MISSION.

I. Beginnings and Struggles.

AN attempt to establish Methodism in the Bahamas, made by a few coloured men, who hailed from Carolina towards the end of last century, came to nought. The small chapel, which they erected in 1796, passed into other hands, to be eventually restored to Methodism upon the decision of the attorney-general many years later. It is now used as a mission hall.

At one time this Society numbered close upon a hundred members, most of whom were slaves. Amongst them were persons of irreproachable character and Christian zeal. But certain of the preachers were guilty of serious indiscretion and came into conflict with the colonial authorities; party strife arose, and dissensions occurred; so that the only method to restore harmony and secure success appeared to lie in obtaining assistance from the Rev. Dr. Coke, the founder and patron of

Methodist missions. Application was accordingly made to the doctor at the Virginia Conference of 1796, but as the preachers were far inadequate in number to the wants of the district, the pressing call was declined.

At the Manchester Conference of 1799 the Rev. Dr. Coke presented a statement as to the position and progress of our West Indian missions. In that document the following sentence occurs: "Mr. Turton, who has introduced the Gospel into St. Bartholomew, has been appointed to Providence Island, to which we have had strong and repeated invitations." The minister thus named embarked from Antigua on May 31st, 1800, spent two months at Turks Islands, whence he proceeded to New York, and after a voyage of sixteen days landed at Nassau on October 22nd. With his arrival began the direct association of Methodism in the Bahamas with the Wesleyan Missionary Committee and the British Conference—an association which continues to this day.

A brief notice of our first missionary may here be fittingly introduced. The Rev. William Turton was born in Barbados in the year 1761. He was the son of a respectable planter, and received as good an education as could be obtained at that time in the West Indies. In his youth he cared nothing for religion, and on one occasion attended a Methodist service with a view to make sport of

the worshippers. The Spirit of God convinced him of his folly, and he

"Who came to scoff, remain'd to pray."

He consecrated himself to God, joined the Methodist Society, and soon began to exercise his gifts as a preacher. His piety, mental endowments, and zeal, attracted the notice of the missionaries, and he was employed to assist in the work of the mission in Antigua. At the Conference of 1795 he was received as a missionary and was appointed to Tobago. His next station was St. Kitts, where he was instrumental in building a chapel and founding a prosperous mission. Thence he removed to the Bahamas, and laboured in this colony until 1816, when, owing to complete failure of health, he became a supernumerary. He died in Nassau on May 10th, 1818, in the fifty-seventh year of his age, and was interred in the burial ground of our eastern church—"Ebenezer." The first five years of his missionary labours in this colony were devoted exclusively to Nassau, from which place the work of Methodism was spread to other islands of the group.

Mr. Turton received the recognition of Governor Dowdeswell, took the oaths of allegiance and supremacy, and procured the necessary licence to preach to slaves. The actual commencement of his work, however, was delayed in consequence of two

serious attacks of illness, during the second of which he expected to die. When he entered upon his labours, it was to encounter opposition and misrepresentation. If he knew nothing of the violence and brutality of infuriated mobs, such as the early Methodist preachers in England had to encounter, yet slander, petty persecution, and impertinent officialism did their utmost to obstruct, annoy, and harass the missionary—thus rendering the task which lay before him anything but easy. Notwithstanding that his mission was one of peace and good-will, his motives were misrepresented, and many scandalous and ill-natured reports were put into circulation. He records his impression that "all means will be used to root out the Methodists from this place." On one occasion a deliberate attack upon his life was planned by a godless fellow; but this evil design was thwarted in a remarkable manner.

In course of time Mr. Turton's aims and methods came to be understood and appreciated by the inhabitants of Nassau; opposition subsided, and some who had been enemies were converted into friends by his kindly manner and conciliatory spirit.

That there was great need for an aggressive evangelism is evident from the fact that the commonest rules of morality and decency were utterly disregarded by a large portion of the community. More than half the population were slaves, to whom

the missionary was drawn both by considerations of humanity and of Christian zeal; his attempts to impart religious instruction were, however, viewed by many with distrust and disapproval. There was a lamentable dearth of religious ordinances, yet exception was taken to his preaching in church hours, and he was required, by a letter from the officer of police, to discontinue the administration of the Lord's Supper.

Amid all these difficulties, the Hon. Thomas Forbes was "an unshaken friend, defending his character in every place," whilst the Hon. Judge Kelsall "helped by his influence to make things easy."

Anthony Wallace and his wife—commonly known as "Mammy"—proved valuable helpers in the work. Their house was used as a preaching place; one partition after another was removed, until eventually the house was so enlarged as to accommodate a congregation of two or three hundred people. By the end of the first year, fully eighty persons were meeting in class, and Wallace and his wife were installed as leaders.

In 1802 Mr. Turton began open air services in the eastern district of Nassau. Attempts to rent a house for preaching failed, whereupon it was resolved to erect a chapel. To this project the Hon. Thomas Forbes lent valuable assistance, whilst the missionary employed several hundred dollars of

his own money upon the undertaking. The chapel proved a great success. "If the house were three times as large," says the missionary, "it would do no more than hold the congregation. It often astonishes me to see the people stand without, even in dark and wet nights, when the house is full, and they will not leave the place till service is over." The eastern chapel brought additional expense, to meet which Mr. Turton kept school—the governor in council having granted the requisite licence. In 1803 the missionary married a lady who was a fruit of his own ministry, and the first white person to join the Methodist Society in Nassau. Her fervent piety and Christian zeal proved to be a valuable assistance to her husband's work during the four happy years of their wedded life.

At the close of the first three years of mission work one hundred and sixty-two persons had been brought into fellowship with the Church, of whom only seven were whites.

The Treaty of Peace between England and France which had been signed at Amiens in March, 1802, was soon violated. The "tyrant of Europe" found or created occasion for the renewal of hostilities:

> "Late he learned humility,
> Perforce, like those whom Gideon school'd with briers."

Within thirteen months after the signing of the

treaty the two nations were again plunged into war. Not only was Europe thrown into the din of battle, but the West Indies became a scene of strife, and in 1804 New Providence was threatened with invasion. Great was the excitement and alarm which prevailed. The Methodists of Nassau betook themselves to prayer; the threatened calamity was averted. Do some doubt that there was a connection between the prayers of godly men and the deliverance of the colony from peril? Not so those who know the preciousness of faith in God and the power of intercessory and fervent prayer. Anyhow, it is easy to imagine with what feeling this praying band of Methodists, assembled in the big room of Anthony Wallace's house, would sing—when danger was passed—such a stanza as the following:—

"A nation God delights to bless,
Can all our raging foes distress,
Or hurt whom they surround?
Hid from the general scourge we are,
Nor see the bloody waste of war,
Nor hear the trumpets sound."

The disturbed condition of Europe and of the West Indian Islands resulted in depression of business in Nassau, and in much poverty. With a view to meet financial difficulties, Mr. Turton increased the number of his pupils, and wrote courageously thus: "I am determined, God being my helper, to go forward." Three of the band

of early Methodists died during the year of trial, evidencing their conversion (says the missionary) by their patience and resignation to the will of God, and by their expressions of hope in a crucified Christ.

Mr. Turton pleaded for ministerial assistance, being desirous of strengthening the cause in Nassau and of extending the mission in the out-islands. To his great joy, having laboured alone for more than three years, a helper arrived on November 5th, 1804, in the person of the Rev. John Rutledge.

Mr. Rutledge was a native of Manor Hamilton, Ireland. Converted to God in his youth, he had been employed as a local preacher, and was ordained by Dr. Coke on August 16th, 1804. He entered upon the work of the mission with ardour and devotion; and for about ten years laboured in Nassau, at Harbour Island, and Eleuthera. He it was who formed the first Society class for white members in Nassau on June 5th, 1806, appointing as its leader one of his own converts—"a young man who had been gay, but gave satisfactory evidence of a change of heart." Mr. Rutledge's preaching attracted large congregations, and the Society, which had fluctuated somewhat, now increased in numbers and in gracious stability. His letters, addressed to Dr. Coke and others, are a valuable contribution to the early history of Methodist work and success in the Bahamas, and it is

to be regretted that, in consequence of a nominal discontinuance of association with the Conference, no record of Mr. Rutledge appears in our connexional documents. In 1815 he married a widow lady to whom Methodism in Nassau at this period was much indebted (Mrs. Glover), and shortly after his marriage withdrew from the itinerant work. He continued, however, to the end of his days to render acceptable service to our cause, and was urged on more than one occasion to resume the active work of the ministry. His reply to such requests was that the state of his health did not justify the taking of such a course. Mr. Rutledge resided in Nassau for ten years after his retirement, and died there on September 4th, 1826, in the forty-ninth year of his age. His last sermon was based on the words "Into Thine hand I commit my Spirit; Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth."

This brief notice of the Rev. John Rutledge has led me to outrun the regular course of history. To return. Assistance for Mr. Turton had become necessary on account of the state of his health. Excessive labours and manifold anxieties had overcome him, and for two months he had been unfit for work. Mrs. Turton and the class leaders laboured diligently on behalf of the infant Church during the missionary's sickness.

Early in 1805 Mr. Turton visited Harbour Island for the benefit of his health. On the voyage he was

driven by stress of weather to Current on the Island of Eleuthera, a circumstance which resulted in the preaching of the first Methodist sermon ever heard on an island which is now a stronghold of Bahamian Methodism. The missionary's text was "Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace, etc." (Job xx. 21). His hearers consisted of "a few white and coloured people, who received the Word with joy." Mr. Turton spent four weeks at Harbour Island, labouring for the good of the people as his strength would permit. On his return voyage he called at Spanish Wells on March 14th, and at noon preached to a congregation mostly white, who "devoured the Word," and begged him to repeat his visit, assuring him that this was the first time that Divine Service had ever been conducted on their island.

A missionary's spirit and labours are largely affected by his reading. The flame of Mr. Turton's zeal was quickened by reading the Life and Journals of David Brainerd. Of this devoted missionary, Mr. Wesley once wrote: "There is a pattern of self-devotion and deadness to the world!" on another occasion: "Find preachers of David Brainerd's spirit, and nothing can stand before them; but without this, what will gold and silver do?" and on yet another, in answer to the question, "What can be done in order to revive the work of God where it is decayed he says: "Let every preacher

read carefully over the Life of David Brainerd. Let us be followers of him as he was of Christ, in absolute self-devotion, in total deadness to the world, and in fervent love to God and man. Let us but secure this point, and the world and the devil must fall under our feet."

Under the influence of such reading, Mr. Turton yearned to carry the news of God's everlasting love to those who were perishing for lack of knowledge. He remained in Nassau for two months only, and then proceeded to Eleuthera—then, as now, one of the most important islands of the group.

II. Cords Lengthened and Stakes Strengthened.

Shortly after Mr. Turton's return from Harbour Island in the spring of 1805, one Hannah Sands, from Rock Sound, Eleuthera, called upon him in great distress about her soul. She conceived that she had committed "the unpardonable sin," and was in a state of utter dejection of mind. The missionary's pious counsels were greatly blessed to her spiritual good. She believed on Christ, and realised conscious salvation from sin. Her subsequent career as a devoted and zealous Christian testified to the reality of the change wrought in her by the Spirit of God. For upwards of twenty years she witnessed a good confession, was given to hospitality and good works, and died in the

year 1829 in the triumph of faith beloved of all who knew her.

Mr. Turton had determined to visit one of the out-islands as a herald of salvation, but had not decided at what particular place his mission should begin. The case of Mrs. Sands led him to fix upon Rock Sound. Accordingly, he left Nassau on May 7th (1805) for the Eleuthera shore. Arriving at Tarpum Bay on the 10th he preached at that settlement in the evening, and next day proceeded to Rock Sound, or "Wreck Sound," as it was then generally called. At that time the population of Eleuthera numbered about two thousand, of whom two-thirds were white persons. Rock Sound was the chief settlement on the island. It was both profligate and suffering. Many of the people exhibited the disgusting consequence of their evil ways: drunkenness and lust had left upon them their terrible legacy of nameless mischiefs. The missionary writes thus: "I found a very wicked and profligate people, but after hearing the Word a short time they seemed a people willing to be saved." Mr. Thomas Hilton, the magistrate and schoolmaster, had read prayers on the Lord's Day, but with little result apparently. He placed the school-room at the missionary's disposal, and encouraged the people to attend his services. Early morning meetings were held for the benefit of the slaves; in a short time class-meetings were es-

tablished, and fifty-three persons were admitted in the Methodist Society.

In his lecture on "The Church of England in the Bahamas," Archdeacon Wakefield says (page 19): "Who can wonder and who can criticise, if during the night of darkness the Church gradually lost her hold over the people, and Methodism asserted itself among the spiritually neglected whites, and the Anabaptists had it their own way among the coloured population? Indeed," he continues, "the most cursory perusal of the history of the Church during this period convinces one that had it not been for the ministrations of Nonconformists almost the entire colony beyond Nassau would have been wrapped in heathen darkness, superstition, and savagery." I do not deem the frank admission of Mr. Wakefield as intended in any way as a slight, much less as a misrepresentation of facts; nor would I have adversely noticed the remark but that it recalls divers and sundry hints which have been thrown out of late, evidently with the intention of discounting the Methodist mission as to its labours and successes among the coloured people of the Bahamas.

But if it is assumed that the work of Methodism was carried on "among the spiritually neglected whites" *exclusively*, I take the liberty to repudiate the assumption. From the beginning of our mission the coloured people have been, equally with the

whites, the object of our solicitude and endeavour. Our records show that throughout the whole period of our work in these islands we have numbered in our Societies both white and coloured folk, and that in pretty close accordance with the relative numbers of the respective races.

In the autumn of 1806, a terrible hurricane swept over the Bahamas; it spent its chief force on the eastern point of Eleuthera, where fearful havoc was made of dwellings, vessels, and growing crops. Great distress prevailed as the result of these losses. The missionary petitioned the Government on behalf of the sufferers, and was instrumental in obtaining for them some temporary relief. Large numbers of the people, however, left the island, and the Society suffered somewhat in consequence.

Despite these hindrances the young cause was vigorous and thriving. With a view to lessen the cost of the mission Mr. Turton kept a school at Rock Sound, as he had previously done in Nassau. The mission house, erected chiefly by the free labour of the people, weathered the force of the hurricane, and proved a refuge for many. A chapel was built, constructed of wattle and plaster, thatched with palm-leaves and supplied with "benches, some with backs and some without."

Other settlements were visited, and at some of them societies were formed. Of these the most important was that of Tarpum Bay. Here a

preaching-house was built and twice enlarged; a small dwelling-house for the use of the missionary was also erected.

Reference has been already made to the valuable assistance given to the work in Nassau by Mrs. Turton. Soon after her husband's removal to Rock Sound she followed him thither, and engaged in Christian work with much zeal and perseverance. She gathered two Society classes, and exhorted the people to repentance and to faith in Christ. In the early part of 1807 she accompanied her husband to Nassau, and while there was taken seriously ill. For nine months she lingered in suffering, and expired on September 10th (1807). Her record is on high. Soon after her death Mr. Turton fell ill, and in the spring of the following year visited the States for the benefit of his health. There he was detained for the space of thirteen months, in consequence of an embargo which had been put upon American vessels during the dispute which arose upon the British Decree. While in Philadelphia, he married a widow lady, Mrs. Short by name—having stipulated that his marriage should not be allowed in any way to influence his missionary projects, and in particular those which concerned "the poor people of Eleuthera." This excellent lady proved herself a valuable helpmeet and rendered excellent service to the cause of Methodism in Rock Sound, Harbour Island, and

Nassau. She survived her husband, subsequently married again, and is remembered by persons still living in Nassau.

Mr. Turton upon his return to the Bahamas resumed his work on Eleuthera, and at the quarterly meeting held at Tarpum Bay at the end of the year, reported two hundred and four members in the Society at the three stations. He remained on the island with but few intermissions until the beginning of 1812, when he returned to Nassau to superintend the erection of a new chapel in the western district of the town.

The earnest appeal to Dr. Coke for an additional missionary resulted in the appointment to the Bahamas of the Rev. William Dowson. This young missionary—a native of Yorkshire—had already spent a short time in the Virgin Islands, Antigua and Trinidad. On his way to Nassau he was detained at Turks Islands for two months; he obtained a licence to preach from the acting agent and commissioner, and conducted religious services in the Barracks, in the Freemasons' Lodge, and in other places—preaching, by official permission, to the slaves between the hours of five and seven. Memorials of these services, and of the good which was done by them, appeared after many days in persons who crossed the missionary's path in the Bermudas and elsewhere. The attention of our Missionary Committee was also directed to Turks

Islands. An imploring letter forwarded by Mr. Dowson to Dr. Coke did not avail to the sending out of a minister forthwith; but the islands were never lost sight of, and subsequently the Rev. Roger Moore visited them, and was duly appointed to labour in them at the next Conference. From that time to the present Methodism has had a place in the evangelisation of these islands. The Circuit stood in connection with the Bahamas District until 1878, at which time it was transferred to the Hayti District.

Another detention occurred at Crooked Island—at that time the place of call for the mail packets from England to Jamaica, and the residence of the post-master-general of the Bahamas. On this island the young missionary made further proof of his ministry.

It was on March 10th, 1812—three months after his embarkation at Trinadid—that Mr. Dowson landed in Nassau, bearing a letter of commendation from his former colleague, the Rev. Thomas Talboys, in which he is characterised as "a sober, studious young man, one who has the good of souls much at heart." The three missionaries (Messrs. Turton, Rutledge, and Dowson) met for consultation at Rock Sound and agreed that Mr. Turton should spend a year in Nassau to superintend the erection of the chapel which Mr. Rutledge had begun. The undertaking was somewhat ambitious, and the

execution of it was attended with unlooked-for difficulty.

The American Republic declared war with England in the course of 1812, and Canada was invaded by a body of two thousand five hundred men under General Hull. The attempt to seize Canada proved unsuccessful, as did a second made by General Wordsworth, but several English frigates were captured by the Americans. The effect of this short war was felt in Nassau in a rapid increase in the price of provisions. Wheat flour sold at twenty-five dollars a barrel and corn meal at twenty-six shillings (currency) a bushel; labour was therefore costly, and the times were unfavourable to chapel building. In spite of these untoward circumstances a commodious stone sanctuary was, however, completed and opened for Divine worship. The congregation was large, and some accession to the membership was made. Early morning prayer-meetings were held for the benefit of slaves, at which, one James Jones, an exemplary Christian, was exceedingly useful. A spot of land in the west of Nassau, belonging to Mr. Robert Thompson, was purchased for a hundred pounds (currency) as a burial ground. Occasional services were held at the Creek, and at the request of the attorney-general (William Wylly, Esq.), the missionaries made regular visits to Clifton to give religious instruction to the slaves on that estate.

On July 26th, 1813, a violent hurricane swept over Nassau; no less than thirty persons lost their lives, and much damage was done to houses and shipping. In the course of the storm the new chapel—not yet free of debt—was completely destroyed. A poor woman who had entered it for safety was crushed to death through the falling of the western gable, and one Josiah Young was so severely injured that he only survived a few days. Fortunately a large house belonging to Mrs. Glover was available for rent, and here the Methodist missionary found a residence, and the congregation a place of worship. In the following year this house became the property of the mission for the sum of $3000, to be paid by instalments. This amount, together with the cost incurred in the alteration of the premises, was raised before the close of 1816, and the property secured to the Connexion.

Notwithstanding the loss of some members by death, and of others by the exercise of discipline, the societies in Nassau increased to nearly four hundred. The mission staff was strengthened by the arrival of the Rev. Joseph Ward in the spring of 1815. He is described by one of his colleagues as a promising young man, of excellent natural abilities, and of burning zeal for the salvation of souls. His enthusiasm was regarded by his senior brethren with some concern; his methods were not always judicious, but his intense devotion, ardent

zeal and great success, were beyond question. He was the first Methodist missionary to visit the island of Abaco; to him also belongs the honour of establishing the first Sunday-schools on Eleuthera, if not indeed the first in this colony (1816); and the first Preachers' Plan prepared in this district was his work. Two years and a half after his arrival in the Bahamas he "fell a victim to arduous exertions in the cause of missions which nothing could repress." He died in Nassau on September 21st, 1817, and was interred in the graveyard of Ebenezer. It is said by one who was present, that "his funeral was probably the largest ever seen in Nassau."

In January, 1816, two additional missionaries arrived, the Revs. Roger Moore and Michael Head. Mr. Moore at once proceeded to Eleuthera to assist Mr. Dowson; Mr. Head was sent to Abaco on a visit and subsequently to Long Island. In this latter place he laboured for about six months with little success.

Now came a series of oppositions. An anonymous critic, writing in a local journal under the *nom de plume* of "John Steepleman," sought to damage Methodism by a series of ill-natured articles. A doughty defender of our faith and procedure appeared in the person of Mr. Dowson, and the assailant withdrew from the scene to reappear no more. An able but cruel article which had appeared

in the *Quarterly Review*, holding up Methodist missionaries to ridicule and reproach, was reproduced in the *Bahama Royal Gazette* for the delectation of Nassau readers.

The most serious opposition, however, took the form of legislative enactments to which reference must now be made. An Act which passed the House of Assembly and the Legislative Council, and received the governor's assent, was suspended until the royal pleasure should be known; but a Section of a Police Act, preventing all religious assemblies after six o'clock in the evening, was brought into immediate and strict operation. The effect of this was to render evening services unlawful. The liberty of the missionaries was thereby seriously restrained, and the opportunities for religious instruction which many of their hearers had enjoyed were completely destroyed. It is evident that services held at four o'clock in the day must have been out of the reach of many persons, and especially of the slaves. It is not difficult to divine the reasons which were supposed to warrant enactments so repressive and arbitrary. The movement which eventually resulted in the emancipation of slaves in the British West Indies had already begun under the leadership of philanthropic abolitionists. The labours of the Methodist missionaries on behalf of the slaves were regarded with suspicion by many who opposed emancipation, and misrepresentations of a serious character were

by no means uncommon throughout the West Indies. The insurrection in Barbados, and the proceedings in England respecting the Registry Bill, gave rise to suspicion and alarm, and induced certain persons to influence the West Indian Governments to place restrictions upon religious liberty. There was nothing, however, in the facts of the case as it concerned the Bahamas to justify measures so arbitrary and persecuting, or to warrant the insolent insinuations contained in the preamble. Investigations, promptly instituted, showed that our missionaries had done nothing to deserve such sweeping accusations, or to justify so serious an infringement of their liberties as religious teachers as was contemplated by these measures, and in the spring of 1821 the enactments were repealed. On Sunday, March 6th, the western chapel was re-opened for evening service, and four days later week-evening service was resumed at the eastern chapel, on which occasion the usual congregation was augmented by two or three hundred additional worshippers who rejoiced in recovered liberty.

The question of emancipation settled, and the spirit and aims of Methodism better understood, the relation of the civil authorities to our Church has been one of absolute cordiality. No opprobrium or suspicion now attaches to the name of "Methodist" in this colony. Loyal members of our Church are to be found in both the Executive and the Legislative

Council, in the House of Assembly, in the Civil and Judicial Departments of the Public Service, and upon all Boards and Commitees of the Colony. Among the representatives of the commerce and industries of the Bahamas, none are more energetic, prosperous, and trusted than are those who are, directly or indirectly, the fruits of our mission. And thus "the old order changeth, yielding place to new."

III. Past Workers and Later Developments.

The story of the extension of the mission to the various islands and in the respective settlements can hardly be told in detail. The toils endured, the discouragements borne, and the successes achieved are akin to those which have attended evangelical effort in other British colonies.

In the public agitation which resulted, in 1834, in the emancipation of eight hundred thousand slaves in the British West Indies, at a cost of twenty millions sterling, the Wesleyan missionaries of the Bahamas, in common with their brethren in the Caribbean generally, took the side of justice and humanity; and in some instances suffered for their pains. The vivid descriptions of that period, written by the Rev. Henry Bleby, are well worth reading even now; especially in the face of the groundless assumptions of some so-called "friends of the coloured people." During "the apprenticeship period" these missionaries

showed a commendable sympathy and sagacity in assisting the negroes who were being prepared for liberty to appropriately enter upon the new conditions of life which awaited them. Questions touching the marriage of slaves, their dwellings, education, social status, etc., engaged their anxious attention and demanded their best discretion.

In course of time the Methodist missionary gained access to the whites of the colony, and in proportion to his success among them has been the harmony and stability of the Churches in these islands.

In all, seventy-six missionaries in connection with the British Conference have laboured in the Bahamas during the nearly one hundred years of the existence of the mission. Their names have not been inscribed on "the roll of fame," though some of them were possessed of gifts and graces which, had they been exercised in less remote regions than these islands of the western tropics, would probably have achieved notoriety and applause. Within the sphere in which they operated the impression left by their life and service is both deep and abiding: their names are household words among a people who loved them for their works' sake. Their career has illustrated Richard Watson's saying, that "a good missionary can neither live nor die in vain." Severally, they assisted to build up the edifice of truth and righteousness; and the Church life and social condition of the Bahamas to-day is the monument to their efficiency



REV. CHARLES PENNY.



REV. WILLIAM WILSON.



REV. HILTON CHEESBOROUGH.



REV. WILLIAM WEST.



REV. ISAAC WHITEHOUSE.

FORMER GENERAL SUPERINTENDENTS OF THE MISSION.

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and devotion. The names of William Turton, Roger Moore, Theophilus Pugh, Charles Penny, Thomas Lofthouse, John Corlett, Thomas Pearson, Isaac Whitehouse, Hilton Cheesborough, and Henry Bleby stand out conspicuously as "men of mark," whilst many another takes his place—at least in this colony—amongst "men worth remembering." Together, this band of missionary workers has sustained the honour of the Church whose ministers they were, contributed under the Divine blessing to its strength and influence, exemplified its spirit of evangelism and aggressiveness, and succeeded in both lengthening its cords and strengthening its stakes.

In times of epidemic disease many of them have been public benefactors, supplying the lack of professional medical service by devoted and heroic attentions to the sick and dying.

In a latitude in which hurricanes occasionally occur, upon seas which are proverbial for their fickleness, amongst reefs which are the terror of mariners, and voyaging in vessels of more than questionable sea-worthiness, it is remarkable that no missionary's life has ever been forfeited, albeit traditions of "hair-breadth escapes" are abundant enough.

In "the home-work" of British Methodism there are at present sixteen ministers who have spent a longer or shorter term of missionary service in the Bahamas; four are labouring in other parts; five

are supernumeraries in England or elsewhere. The greater number of former Bahamian missionaries now "rest with God."

The results of their labours and example may, in part, be found in a systematised and compact branch of the great Methodist Church, with its network of evangelical and educational agencies, its leavening power of godliness, its regard for Sabbath sanctity.

The words of an eloquent preacher concerning the first apostles of Our Lord may be applied without vanity to these godly men whose temper, labours, and successes show them to have been, in the only valid and valuable sense, "in the succession." "They constructed no melancholy theories; but, having planted many a rose of Sharon, and made their little portion of the desert smile, departed in the faith that the green margin would spread as the seasons of God come round, till the mantle of heaven covered the earth, and ended with Eden, as it had begun."

A few names there are which have fallen out of our records; the memory of them being only too suggestive of the exhortation "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." If the record is not wholly free from defection, it is one which furnishes a laudable instance of ministerial fidelity, and an illustration of the words "He is able to keep."



EBENEZER CHURCH, NASSAU.

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The Bahamas have not been rich in the quality of raising young men for the ministry. But of those who have laboured in the district, eight were Bahamian born, whilst several young men who were the fruit of this mission have entered the ministry of Methodism in the United States, in Canada, or in the West Indies.

If the part taken in the extension of Methodism by persons other than missionaries is not referred to in detail, it is not that valuable assistance to that work has been wanting. It would be ungenerous to omit reference to co-operation given from various quarters and in many ways. Our stations, particularly those on the out-islands, could not have been worked without the assistance of numerous unpaid agents, such as local preachers, exhorters, lay readers, class leaders, and Sunday-school teachers. Here, as in other places, Methodism owes a large debt of gratitude to its lay agency. More than sixty public services are conducted at Methodist centres every Sabbath, and eight-and-twenty Sabbath-schools require to be taught. It is evidently impossible for ten ministers to perform all this duty, especially as the settlements are widely scattered and difficult to reach. The one hundred and five local preachers and the three hundred and seventy Sunday-school teachers who assist in the work to-day are in "the bright succession" of godly helpers whom Methodism has rejoiced to acknowledge during the ninety-six

years of her existence in these islands. Family instincts and traditions are still influential; names which figured in the district records of three-quarters of a century ago re-appear on our Circuit Plans and Circuit Registers to-day: many a good man has left a priceless inheritance to his children. Some of the invaluable fellows who now "carry the minister" over the clear Bahamian waters are the sons of fathers who in their day rendered similar service to his predecessors of the long ago.

The churches, school-rooms, residences, lodges and land which represent the mission properties of the district were, ten years ago, estimated by a painstaking statistician (Rev. Robert Whittleton) to be of the value of £29,000. Since that period other valuable properties have been acquired, so that the present value in properties may be said to exceed £30,000. The total debt remaining upon real estate does not amount to one-tenth of that sum.

In point of assistance given to the erection of Church properties our Methodist Bahamians have been second to none in their self-denying toils and gifts. The cost of erecting these buildings has in almost every case been lessened by free labour given, and by the gathering of building materials from near and from far by willing hands.

The cheerful and efficient service of godly women forms a pleasing feature in the story of the mission. Not only in the gentler ministries in which devoted

women elsewhere have evidenced their love to Christ and His cause have these Bahamian sisters earned a good degree, but in the rougher and more toilsome assistance given to Church extension they have taken their part, fearing no evil. Some of them—unqualified for teaching or for ministrations like those with which the name Dorcas has been associated—have "done what they could" even as hewers of wood and drawers of water. In the erection of the new and commodious church at Cove, on the island of Eleuthera, for example, the value of free labour was estimated at not less than £300, and a large part of this "free labour" was given by women who declined no service, however menial, if only they might have a part and lot in the matter.

It is, however, to be regretted that a readiness to participate in the distinctly spiritual activities of the Church has not been a conspicuous feature of Bahamian Methodists generally, and that the noble devotion of the laity of our Church in England has not as yet "enthused" many who are possessed of gifts for this kind of service. Nevertheless, a steady advance has been made during recent years, and at the present time the outlook is anything but discouraging. Vigorous and unblushing attempts to alienate the affections of our people from the Church of their baptism are met for the most part with the indifference which such unprincipled conduct deserves.

Satisfied as to the Scriptural character of their Church, the Divinely attested quality of its ordinances as means of grace, these Bahamian evangelicals show little disposition to be carried away by the assumptions of sacerdotalism, or the insinuations of those who denounce a separate ministry. The nearness of these islands to the American continent lays them open to the visits of persons whose teaching does not leave a blessing behind it. Our missionaries have, for the most part, resolved to abstain from controversy and to pursue their proper work on the lines and by the methods which in past days have been so signally owned and blessed by God. Under conditions of provocation and sometimes of reproach, it has been their study to exemplify the accepted motto which represents the Catholic spirit of Methodism: "The friends of all, the enemies of none."

That the Nassau Circuit has been for many years self-supporting, and that the whole district approaches so nearly to independence of foreign aid, is evident proof of the generosity of our people, a large proportion of whom are poor after a fashion and to a degree that "the lower classes" in England wot not of.

The Bahamas District Auxiliary of the Foreign Missionary Society was organised on March 19th, 1817, and was the first of such auxiliaries to be established upon the mission field. No manner of

doubt arises as to the loyalty of this people to foreign missions. The ingenious methods adopted for collecting the funds would amuse and perhaps stimulate an English observer. The alway-popular device of "the Mission Boat" is but one of the resources of the art of skilful begging, whilst the sale of collected produce—taken in as freight—if it does not reach the standard of comedy known in Fiji, is sufficiently entertaining.

The Bahamas Auxiliary of the British and Foreign Bible Society—organised in the year 1833—owes its inception to the zeal and sagacity of the Rev. Theophilus Pugh. In its career of quiet and unobtrusive activity it has rendered, and continues to render, good service to the colony, and has never lacked the cheerful support of evangelicals in these islands.

In taking account of Church growth things must be looked at as they are. A group of small islands, with little or no regular inter-insular communication, presents no such possibilities of Christian service as may often be found in extended countries where means of transit are easily obtained. Nor can a small colony, whose population is barely kept up from census-taking to census-taking, furnish evangelistic opportunities such as exist in lands which year by year receive thousands of immigrants, among whom are to be found men and women of sound religious principles and of godly zeal. Progress may

be of various kinds; advancement is not always by leaps and bounds. The steady increase and improvement of Church property in the shape of churches, school buildings, and mission houses, is a sure sign of growing strength, and an important factor in the process of consolidation. An able writer on Methodism speaks of it as "a Revival Church in its spirit, and a Missionary Church in its organisation." If the spirit of primitive Methodism be maintained, and the agencies of organised Methodism directed to their proper aim and sphere, then—up to the measure of their opportunities—Bahamian Methodists will be able to give a good account of the sacred trust committed to them in the Providence of God as a section of the one great Church of Christ "militant here upon earth."

IV. The Missionary Afloat.

Andros Island is the largest of the Bahamian group; it includes large tracts of country still unexplored. Like the rest of these islands, Andros is of coral limestone formation, and presents an inviting field of observation and research to the naturalist. Upon these shores may be found such shells, algæ, and other marine curiosities as only the western tropics can boast. Of all the Bahamas, Andros is richest in timber. Mahogany, cedar, ebony, and other choice woods are among its chief exports. In the absence of roads, the logs are dragged for

many miles over rocky tracts to the sea-coast for shipment. The oranges of Andros are judged to be among the finest produced in this colony. The usual price received by a vendor is four dollars per thousand. Oranges five a penny! and fit for a nobleman's table, so luscious are they and sweet; but land is cheap, and scientific culture is unknown. During the failure of the orange crop in Florida, and the disturbed condition of the island of Cuba, the growers of citrus fruits in the Bahamas have realised somewhat higher prices for their exports.

Andros gave promise of being one of the chief centres of the sisal-hemp industry. Under the spirited patronage of the late governer of the colony (Sir Ambrose Shea) the growth of sisal was rapidly developed. It may be true that "the wealth of the Bahamas lies in the sea," in the apparently inexhaustible supply of sponge; but if the hopes of sisal growers be realised, this new industry will be of considerable advantage to a colony which is none too rich in its export supply. The plant is of the agave family, and until recently was regarded as a troublesome weed; it is now known to produce a useful fibre, and thousands of acres are already devoted to its culture. First crops have been sent to market, and are pronounced to be of excellent strength and quality.

This new industrial development has a prospective bearing upon our Methodist work in the Bahamas.

New settlements are likely to spring up, which will draw from our other stations a population that has found remunerative labour a thing not obtainable. For some years shrinkage has been going on in places where the fathers of this mission found scope for their energies, and where glorious results followed their labours. Should the expectations of the speculators in sisal prove to have been well grounded, we must be prepared for new demands upon our evangelistic services, and the duty will be pressed upon us of going "not only to those who want us, but to those who want us most." Then will arise the question, not of preaching places, but of *preachers:* in fact, it is already facing us. If we are to "keep" the Methodism of the Bahamas, we must "extend" it, and embrace within the area of our operations such settlements as give promise of growth and permanency.

I sailed from the port of Nassau in one of the small craft engaged in the timber trade. It was ten o'clock on Saturday night when our skipper gave orders to "let go."

"The night
Was all irradiant with the light
Of stars like moons, which, hung on high,
Breathe and quiver in the sky;
Each, its silver haze divine
Flinging in a radiant line
O'er gorgeous flower and mighty tree
On the soft and shadowy sea."

Phosphoric spangles danced and glinted on the waves as they broke on the sides of our tiny craft, "the surges rejoiced as they bore us along," and at daybreak we passed the coral reef, and set foot on the shore of Andros Island.

No "preacher's home" at all answering to hospitalities which the word suggests to many an English minister awaited my arrival. The practical kindness which "at home" takes the form of bed and board is not possible here, chiefly through the poverty of the people. But I am not homeless, nor do I lack all such attentions as are here regarded as belonging to the code of courtesy. A miniature mission house, stone built and with shingled roof innocent of ceiling, and containing two rooms, gives me welcome shelter, and commands views of the coast line and of the adjacent cocoanut plantations.

On these out-stations the missionary must carry both purse and scrip; the latter is an essential part of his outfit. My wallet, however, consists of a plain box, laden with divers and sundry articles supplied by a Nassau store, sufficiently curious and useful withal to merit notice. Here is bread, flour, biscuits, and macaroni; tea, sugar, cocoa, and condensed milk; tinned meats, and Irish potatoes. To ward off the insects—whose name is legion—sundry precautions have been taken. If some of the most-to-be-dreaded insects of the tropics are not in evidence, the ubiquitous mosquito is enough by him-

self. Of him a traveller has said, that "for malice, mockery, and venom of tooth and trumpet, he is without a match in the world." Milk of cocoanuts serves in lieu of the uninviting water of the settlement; while oranges are more plentiful than were the Kentish raspberries which once found their way to City Road Chapel during a London Conference. After all this, surely the luxury of the missionary could no farther go.

The wants of the little church have also to be supplied. In addition to personal outfit, class-books, society tickets, and baptismal certificates have been brought hither, and wine for use at the Lord's Table.

My work began on Sunday, when I held three public services in our mission chapel at Nicoll's Town, administered the Lord's Supper, and met five society classes for the renewal of tickets. The congregations were good, and would have been better but that many of the men belonging to the settlement are at present "doing business on the great waters." I spent in all five days on this station, visiting the people and holding a religious service every evening. The people—like most of the coloured folk of the Bahamas—are respectful, gentle in speech and manner, and appreciative of whatever is done on their behalf. They show a remarkable acquaintance with our hymns and sing well; they appear to be cordially attached to

Methodism, and, considering the scantiness of their means, contribute well to its support.

We await with considerable solicitude the answer to our application to England for some further assistance of our work in this and other islands of the group. It will not be possible for some time to come to raise a native agency that shall be equal to the demands of the occasion, and to the calls that reach us to "lengthen the cords and strengthen the stakes" of Bahamian Methodism.

In few of our mission fields has there been so satisfactory a return for the labour that has been expended; in few is there a better prospect of success, if only we imitate "the men of Issachar, who had understanding of the times."

During my stay in Nicoll's Town I went to Mastic Point to visit a son of the Right Hon. Joseph Chamberlain, who has taken up his abode here. He has two hundred workpeople employed in clearing the bush and planting sisal. A goodly number of these are from near settlements, others have come hither from distant islands of the group. I met with a cordial reception, and had the satisfaction of receiving letters from England by the mail schooner, which arrived whilst I was sitting with Mr. Chamberlain on the piazza of his new house.

This extensive plantation has been recently abandoned. At one time it was held that sisal was very much of an air plant, and that it would "grow

anywhere." Experience has shown the fallacy of this notion, and that the plant requires soil if it is to be productive. Had greater care been taken in the selection of land, this extensive plantation, and a smaller one on the island of New Providence, would never have come to ignominious failure, or have brought even a temporary discouragement upon a new and promising industry. The Bahamas fibre is pronounced by experts at Kew to be of a superior quality, and the establishment of new plantations in various parts of the colony shows that in the opinion of investers in this industry "there is money in it." As in most new enterprises, experience has had to be bought.

My next halt was at Stanyard Creek, a poor settlement, but beautiful for situation, and reminding one of pictures of Fiji. About four years since Methodist services were commenced here; already we have sixty members in society. Our "leading man" was for many years a catechist here in connection with the Episcopal Church. Both he and his wife are now class-leaders, and greatly appreciate our Methodist arrangements for Christian fellowship. I preached three times on Sunday, met the classes for the renewal of tickets, administered the Lord's Supper, and baptized five children and one adult. I also conducted Divine worship every evening.

To-morrow I hope to get a passage across the "tongue of the ocean" to Nassau.

Whither my next tour of visitation may lead me I know not; whether to the Biminis, the fabled "fountain of perpetual youth," or to San Salvador, where Columbus first set foot on the New World nearly four hundred years ago.

With Whittier, I say—

> "I know not where His islands lift
> Their fronded palms in air;
> I only know I cannot drift
> Beyond His love and care."

Without describing numerous experiences of out-island work, one incident of adventure may here be introduced.

Intent upon visiting the island of San Salvador, I left Nassau on October 22nd in a small schooner bound for that island. The prospect was not inviting, as the barometer was low at the time. However, the captain of the little craft was more than hopeful that no harm would overtake him. We proceeded to Eleuthera pleasantly enough, and I landed at Palmetto Point, where I conducted service at sunrise. It was my intention to preach at noon at Savannah Sound; but no boat could "make the shore." Our people urged me to return to Governor's Harbour with as little delay as possible, as there were indications of "a blow." This accordingly I did, on horseback. The schooner I had left proceeded on her voyage, and I remained at Governor's Harbqur, giving assistance to our missionary there—

Rev. W. A. Bird. During my stay there I heard no tidings of the craft, but feared that she must have encountered a severe storm. Shortly after my arrival in Nassau I heard that the schooner was overtaken in a terrific gale, both her masts were torn away, the craft capsized, and some thirty persons were for some time in great peril. Fortunately, no life was lost, but much suffering had to be endured before the vessel—"only not a wreck"—could make the land. Much concern was felt for my safety by those who knew whither I had gone; but, happily for me, the wise counsel of those who know the perils of these waters in "the hurricane season" had saved me from all danger. Surely God's hand was upon me for good.

During my short stay on Eleuthera I was impressed with the solid character of the work of our brethren who have laboured on that island. The congregation which assembled at Palmetto Point soon after daybreak was one which would have cheered the heart of any lover of missions. The spacious and substantial chapel, the enthusiasm of the people, and the hearty singing, all testified to the thoroughness and success of past labours, and to the good tone of Methodist Church life at the present day. Governor's Harbour is not surpassed by any out-station in the Bahamas. The noble church and the excellent mission house are a credit to the missionaries who superintended their erection some years

since, whilst the gratifying influence of a recent revival of religion is evident both in the Sunday and week-day services.

V. Abaco and its Cays.

Of all the cays which lie off the shore of Abaco, Green Turtle Cay is considered to be the most important. If ever these cays were inhabited by Carib Indians no trace of them is to be found nowadays. In the latter part of last century Abaco began to be settled by Loyalists, who quitted South Carolina upon the Declaration of Independence.

On the self-same day upon which the Battle of Waterloo was fought (June 18th, 1815) a young Methodist missionary sailed out of Nassau harbour for Abaco, to preach to its people the gospel of peace and good-will. Twenty-one persons, being heads of families at Green Turtle Cay, had sent their petition to the senior missionary in Nassau, praying him to visit them and give them religious instruction. Busy with the erection of a chapel on another island of the group, he was unable himself to immediately comply with their request; but Joseph Ward, full of fervour and enthusiasm, promptly availed himself of the opportunity. To him, therefore, belonged the honour of being first to preach the Gospel to the Abaconians.

The work thus commenced was full of promise.

The following year witnessed the erection of a chapel, under the superintendence of the Rev. Michael Head, who spent six months in Abaco. From time to time the place was visited, as the strength of the mission staff permitted. In 1819 Abaco appeared on the stations in the Minutes of Conference; the resources of the district did not, however, always permit of a ministerial appointment for the entire year. In such circumstances Abaco was associated with Harbour Island, or with New Providence.

In course of time the work was extended to other settlements "on the main" and on the cays; thus a duly constituted circuit was formed. With the development and consolidation of our Church in this part of the colony the name of the late Rev. Thomas Lofthouse will be honourably associated for all time. Under his vigorous and judicious superintendence the present substantial aud commodious chapel at Green Turtle Cay was built. Those were days of large expectations—expectations, alas! never fulfilled—but Methodism secured a sanctuary which for half a century has been a centre of light and gracious influence.

In the cemetery may be found memorials of bereavements sustained by the mission from time to time. Here lie the remains of James Hutchings, a young missionary who fell a victim to yellow fever in 1853. During the few short months of his ministry here he "acquired in no ordinary degree the con-



DATE PALM, ABACO. [*To face p.* 57.

fidence and affections of our people, and was the honoured instrument of the revival of the work of God." Here, too, rests the venerable Joshua Jordan, who, after forty-four years of ministerial service, chiefly spent on this side the Atlantic, expired at Green Turtle Cay in 1888, in the seventy-sixth year of his age. His last words were: "All is well." Beneath the boughs of a leafy mulberry-tree are other graves, in which lie the children of missionaries of bygone days. Nowhere among these flowery islands of the sea are the oleanders more profuse or more gorgeous than in this quiet "burying piece"; nowhere could they be more suggestive than here, where

> "All through the summer night
> Those blossoms red and bright
> Spread their soft breasts, unheeding, to the breeze.'

The widely-scattered settlements which form the Abaco circuit can only be reached by boats. Many hundreds of miles are thus covered by the missionaries in the course of each year in the visitation of the societies. It is worthy of note that, notwithstanding innumerable instances of risk and danger with which the story of this mission abounds, no missionary has ever lost his life among the reefs and shoals of Bahamian waters. Stories of "perils of waters," of exposure and hardship, are plentiful enough, and weather-beaten seamen testify to the

bravery and fortitude of our missionaries. Nothing but love for the souls of men, and a high sense of duty, can sustain our brethren amidst the inconveniences and privations incident to this kind of missionary service. Thank God, these are not wanting.

In the prosecution of our work among these Abaco cays, as in other parts of the Bahamas, we are largely indebted to the generosity of our people, who, "without fee or reward," convey the missionary from place to place. Thanks to the kindness of the Methodist people, both boats and boatmen are generally forthcoming as occasion requires, "and all for love." The total cost of missionaries' travelling in the Abaco Circuit rarely exceeds a few shillings each year. It is the least that one can do to acknowledge the valuable service rendered to the cause of religion by some of our Bahamians (both white and coloured), who devote whole days to the self-imposed task of "carrying the minister" to and from his distant stations, and not always over the smoothest of seas; and when "at home" prayer is offered for

"Those in peril on the sea,"

it may not be superfluous to remember that possibly more than one Bahamian missionary has much need of such intercession. Our beloved Dr. E. E. Jenkins might have had his brethren of these

Western waters in his mind's eye when he wrote his hymn (No. 1003) and taught us to sing—

"When lone upon the furious waves,
Where danger fiercely rides,
There is a hand unseen that saves,
And through the ocean guides."

III.

AMONG THE FLORIDA KEYS.

I. Prospecting:

THE schooner communication between Nassau and Key West is not to be praised either for its elegance or its comfort, but the kind attentions of the master and crew of the vessel in which I sailed (*Fearless*) were all that one could reasonably expect. I spent both my days and nights on deck, for reasons which were at any rate satisfactory to myself, and had exceptional opportunities for observational astronomy. Our good ship behaved well; we passed over the Great Bahama Bank, the terror of mariners, and crossed the Gulf Stream right gallantly. But, alas! when we were almost within sight of our "desired haven" the wind fell, and we were obliged to ride at anchor for twelve hours. Sunrise found us where sunset had left us, just in line with one of the lighthouses south of the Florida Keys. At early morn, however, a gentle breeze sprang up, and we slowly glided towards the most southerly port of the most southerly State of the Union.



VIEW IN KEY WEST (CAYO HUESO).

[*To face p.* 60.

At length "the most remarkable spot in Uncle Sam's domain" came in sight. Key West presents a pleasing appearance as seen from the water; in fact, it is a case in which

"Distance lends enchantment to the view."

The forts, garrison, and lighthouse, the larger houses with their cupolas, here a spire and there a tower, and, blending with all, a tropical foliage and a tropical sky, make a picture agreeable enough to the eye. The line of wharves, and the presence of steamers and sailing vessels, suggest a considerable shipping trade, whilst the hum of many voices floats over the clear deep water and reaches us as we stand on deck, announcing the near presence of a busy mart.

We were "boarded" by custom-house officials; the medical officer of the port, and the U.S. emigration agent also came aboard and cast upon us a somewhat piercing eye, as if to assure himself that none among us was likely to add to the national burden of penniless and characterless immigrants. Baggage was examined aboard, the process being carried out with courtesy and despatch.

A warm welcome awaited me as I set foot on Cayo Hueso, as the Spaniards named the island. The American name—Key West—is said to be a sailor's rendering of the ancient designation. A carriage had been provided to convey me to the

abode of an "up town" lady at whose house it had been arranged that I should take up my quarters. I reached the house, although *en route* I was agitated by many a fear lest I should be shaken to pieces, so uneven was the road and so Jehu-like the conduct of the driver. In the generally smooth streets of Nassau, certain ugly holes may occasionally be encountered, but for holey streets go to Key West. Duval Street has been cared for, and good sidewalks have been made along a considerable portion of it, thus rendering it the most inviting route in the whole "city," so far as I know. But as to the rest of the thoroughfares they are simply atrocious, dusty in dry weather, and dirty in wet.

Most of the buildings in Key West are constructed of wood, and here and there may be seen examples of wooden houses and wooden churches which would be an ornament to any town on either side of the Atlantic. Since the destructive fire of 1886 there has been a growing tendency in favour of less inflammable structures than those made of wood. The new post office, the city hall, the courthouse, the stone church, and several private dwellings and stores are good examples of the recent change. The place is, for the most part, well laid out, and in time Key West will doubtless become "no mean city." The planting of trees and shrubs has received attention. The graceful cocoanut palm, the gorgeous ponciana, and other tropical trees and

climbing plants already subdue the glare and afford pleasant shade in several parts of the city.

The island is only six and a half miles in extent at its greatest length, and but little more than one mile across at its greatest width. The highest ground is only sixteen feet above mean sea-level. There is but little soil; what passes for soil is merely triturated coral, in which, however, trees and flowers appear to thrive. Rose and jasmines, hibiscuses and bougainvillæas, flourishing in Christmas week, indicated both the kindliness of the ground and the mildness of the climate. The climate resembles that of the Bahamas. Key West "has unquestionably the finest climate in the United States." It is asserted that this is the only city under the Stars and Stripes where neither frost nor snow has ever been seen. The lowest temperature ever recorded was 41°; the average temperature for mid-winter is 72°. "A norther" means a falling thermometer, and overcoats are a comfort here at 60°.

The city proper occupies the western end of the Key, and contains a population of close upon twenty-five thousand souls. Of these ten thousand are Cubans, nearly eight thousand Bahamians, the rest are Americans, English, Germans, Chinamen, etc. This heterogeneous population is scarcely less remarkable than are the conditions of its daily life. Here are tramcars and electric lights, telegraphs and telephones, banks and markets, yet here cows

are led along the public streets in the early morning hours to be milked at the doors of customers, after the fashion of Cuban towns, while goats and even pigs wander at their pleasure in the highways. Alongside of Western enterprise and invention John Chinaman dreams his dreams of "the Celestial empire," scarcely mixing with his nearest neighbours, a sort of social parasite, silent and self-contained.

The chief industries of Key West are those of cigar manufacture and sponge fishing. The former furnishes employment with liberal wages for thousands of men and boys, women and girls. The major part of these are Cubans—a gambling, cock-fighting, Sabbath-desecrating community; rich for four-and-twenty hours after wages are paid, and poor all the week besides. One factory turns out as many as a million cigars in a week. The sponge fishing is chiefly in the hands of the Bahamians, whose rough toils in the bay and among the reefs make Key West an important centre of sponge supply and distribution. A fleet of three hundred vessels of different kinds is employed in this industry.

The city is well supplied with fish, vegetables, fruit, and comestibles of all kinds from the neighbouring keys and the coast of Mexico. Steamers ply between Key West and Tampa, Havana, New Orleans, and the Mexican ports. Its geographical position renders this diminutive island important

as a military and naval station, commanding as it does the most frequented passage into the Gulf of Mexico, and standing in close relation to Cuba and other islands of the West Indies, as well as the coast of Central America. What Gibraltar is to the Mediterranean, Key West is, or may be, to the Gulf of Mexico.

Forming part of the State of Florida, whatever else this peculiar city is, it is first of all, and most of all, American. The laws, usages, manners, and currency of the United States gradually but surely leave their impress upon this social conglomerate. A thousand miles and more from Washington, it is nevertheless an integral part of that powerful republic whose image is "Liberty," and whose superscription is "In God We Trust." The familiar names of Methodist and Baptist are those which figure most frequently in its religious parlance, and the hymns and songs of the two great agencies in Western evangelisation are better known in its streets than are the licentious and ribald ballads of godless Cuba. In the Southern States one realises the significance of the old slave-song with which the "Jubilee Singers" made us familiar :—

> "The Methodists and Baptists have just gone along
> To ring those charming bells."

The occasion of my visit to Key West involved association with many different people, from all of whom I received courteous and obliging attentions.

II. Organisation.

Key West soon came to be regarded as a sort of El Dorado; both whites and coloured folk left "the old shore" to settle on this Florida Key, fascinated by visions of dollars and luxury. To some the dream has been realised; to others the vision has been only a delusion and a snare. Notwithstanding the presence and influence of the Churches, many who were religious when they left their native village in the Bahamas have drifted into the godlessness of this half-Cubanised city, with its Sunday base-ball, its taverns, its lotteries, and its social abominations. For good or for evil, from a worldly point of view, this place has proved to be the occasion of serious leakage to the Methodism of many of our out-island settlements.

In Key West—in common with the prevailing custom of the United States—coloured and white do not generally worship together. The policy of the Churches in the States has been to help the coloured people in all matters touching education and religion, but to leave them to work out their own approved methods, with a view to the development of self-reliance and the creation of a sense of responsibility among them. In so far as I can appreciate both the line of action and the motive which prompted its adoption it appears to be creditable alike to the intelligence and to the heart

of Church leadership in the States; and, generally, it works well.

But the case of coloured Bahamians in Key West differs from that of the negroes of the States. In the Bahamas they have enjoyed the benefits of emancipation for sixty years and more; they have been educated side by side with the whites in the public schools of the colony, have worshipped with them, joined with them in "our more private and social means of grace," and shared in the honours and duties of Church office, and have been shepherded by white pastors who enjoy the complete confidence of the coloured race. Upon their arrival and during their stay in this island city there comes an end to all this. This colour question in the Southern States is not one to be settled in a year or two. Social knots are not things to be cut, but to be untied. To attempt to force any sweeping change in the relation of the Southerner to his negro brother would be unsafe and impolitic. The present situation is not so much one in which ethical sentiment is at fault as one in which existing social conditions are arbitrary and unfavourable to fusion.

There was nothing, therefore, for coloured Bahamians who desired Christian worship and fellowship, but to accept the ordinances and discipline of American coloured churches. This, for reasons which need not be detailed, many of them

distinctly declined to do. During my visit in December 1892 it became plain, after interviews with resident pastors and leading citizens, that our duty in the matter was not to compete with the existing religious agencies of this strangely-mixed population, but to supplement them by organising a Church which should stand connected with the Bahamas district, and thus with the British Conference. To that end much encouragement was given by both ministers and laymen in Key West, who recognise in the peculiar needs of the Bahamian and Cuban elements the *raison d'être* of our mission.

The names of thirty-two persons were at once enrolled as members of the Society, twenty-three of whom had formerly been members of our Church in the Bahamas, and some of whom had held office amongst us. Local preachers, leaders, and stewards were appointed, a small hall was hired for our services, and arrangements were made for periodical pastoral visitation by ministers from the Bahamas. These arrangements were approved by the District Synod and confirmed by the missionary committee. The quarterly visits were attended with great encouragement, and proved to be "seasons of grace and sweet delight" to our people. This arrangement obtained for more than two years, during which the congregations increased, a Sunday-school was started, sinners were converted and backsliders recovered. Our membership was soon doubled.

It became evident that to do justice to the rapidly-growing and promising cause it was necessary that a minister should be appointed to reside here. Accordingly, in 1895, the Rev. James A. Archer was appointed, and took up his residence, bravely undertaking that as to finance the Gulf of Mexico Mission should be self-supporting. To him, therefore, belongs the honour of having carried this new mission beyond the experimental stage to that of hopeful development.

From the first the work has been regarded as *a step towards Cuba.* That beautiful, resourceful, but spiritually unenlightened island has for many years attracted to itself the sympathy of evangelical Christians in the Bahamas. Our district records show that from time to time our missionaries in these islands have longed to carry to Cuba the blessed truths of a present, free, and full salvation. Impecuniosity, and not indifference, explains how it is that Bahamian Methodism has not overflowed to *the Pearl of the Antilles.* The condition of Cuba at the present time, and for several years past, has not been such as to encourage evangelistic aggression. But Cuba is on the eve of important changes, though what they will be few persons would undertake to predict. Only one thing is clear: no condition of things that is conceivable could outdo the present repressive and inquisitorial attitude of the authorities towards Protestantism.

But if Cuba is practically closed for the time to the Protestant preacher, Cubans in large numbers can be reached, and are being reached by the evangel. Within a hundred miles of Havana itself, on Cayo Hueso, in Tampa also, and in other cities within the State of Florida, many of these Cuban settlers are hearing to-day "in their own tongue the wonderful works of God." In this good work our own missionary is taking his part—prosecuting his study of Spanish, and seeking by daily intercourse with his Cuban neighbours and by the distribution of Scripture portions and evangelical tracts to seek and save these pleasure-loving, Sabbath-desecrating children of the Caribbean; and tokens for good are not lacking. In his own country the Cuban associates religion with a system of Government officialism which his soul abhors. Mother Church is, in his estimation, part of a great political tyranny, and her priests are regarded as arrogant and rapacious. Under kindlier conditions, the Cuban is known to develop a spiritual responsiveness, whilst his inborn politeness makes him a delightful pupil.

IV.

THE PEARL OF THE ANTILLES.

I. A Saturday Night in Havana.

AS I passed the brilliantly lighted café at the corner of Ricla a small printed card was presented to me. It contained the following invitation to attend an entertainment :—

> *LINTERNA MAGICA.*
>
> TARJETA DE ADMISION PERSONAL PARA LA EXHIBICIÓN DE VISTAS QUE TENDRA LUGAR EN LA INGLESA BAUTISTA EL DIA 17 A LAS 7½ DE LA NOCHE. *A. J. Diaz.*

Thus invited, I turned into what had not the slightest resemblance to a Baptist church. It was, in fact, a spacious, well-built, well-decorated theatre, capable of accommodating, as nearly as I could judge, close upon two thousand persons. The only indication of anything suggestive of Christian worship was the Scripture text standing in large characters amidst the decoration of the dome: DIOS ES AMOR—*God is love.*

happiness he began to translate it into his own language; but learning from a friend that the book could be obtained in Spanish he secured a copy and read it diligently. His interest increased and deepened as he read the story recorded by St. John of the blind man to whom Christ gave sight. His professional studies had been particularly directed to the eyes, but here was an occurrence for which his scientific knowledge could offer no explanation. He read and re-read the narrative until at length—God's Spirit being his teacher—he found in the miracle more than a history. He saw and felt his own sinful condition before God, and Christ had mercy upon him and "opened his eyes." He dwelt much upon the record of our Lord's sufferings and death, and became filled with strong desire to return to Cuba and make known the love of Christ to sinners.

The Rebellion being now over he went back to his native place, and began his work as a missionary to his own family and next acquaintance. A little group of friends met regularly to read and study the Bible, and one after another found the Lord. Here was the nucleus of a Church, and in a short time the congregation numbered several hundred persons. Amongst those who were "being saved" were the father and mother of the doctor-evangelist.

Now the priests began to oppose. They persuaded the patients of the Protestant doctor to

forsake him, upon the plea that he was insane, and would be likely to do them injury—perhaps poison them. Thus deserted, and with his means of livelihood gone, he went again to New York. Whilst there, he heard that in Philadelphia there were certain persons who desired to see a Protestant mission commenced in Cuba. He sought an interview with these, the result of which was that he was sent back to his native place as a missionary. In course of time his work was heard of by Baptist ministers of the Southern Convention who visited Havana, and, being satisfied with his methods and success, recommended the association of this Cuban mission with the American Board of Missions. The recommendation was adopted, and from that time the work has continued to spread and grow, until now it is the largest and most influential Protestant mission in Cuba, having preaching-halls and schools in several parts of Havana and its suburbs.

A year or two since a newly-erected theatre was offered for sale, and was purchased by the mission for *sixty thousand dollars*; and, said the missionary, with a gladness of spirit which was positively contagious, "last week we paid the last dollar, and now the place is ours."

Before our conversation had concluded a familiar strain fell on my ear; the children were singing, in Spanish, a hymn with the refrain—

"Sweetest note in seraph song," etc.

By this time the floor of the theatre-church was well filled with people; the front seats of the galleries were also occupied; then the electric lights were extinguished, and the lantern views were projected upon the screen hung on what was the stage, but is now the preacher's platform. The best possible behaviour was maintained throughout the whole of the entertainment, and when any Scripture subject was exhibited a noticeable hush fell upon the company. Rarely have I heard Toplady's fine hymn sung more impressively than on this occasion, as the children's voices rang out with—

> "Roca de la eternidad,
> Fuiste abierta para mi," etc.

Who will ever know the effect of these sounds and sights presented on this Saturday night to the citizens of godless Havana? Picture and song, in this case, are nothing less than bread cast upon the waters to be found after many days.

At 8.30 next morning the doors of the theatre-church stood open again; not now for "La exhibición de vistas," but for Sabbath-school. The gaming Habañeros were already crowding round the domino- and billiard-tables and trafficking in lottery tickets, preparatory to the bull-fights, base-ball, and balloon-ascent which were due later on in the day. But there was, at least, one stream of

life-giving instruction flowing in the midst of all the Sabbath desecration; for the missionary was impressing upon some scores of young Cubans assembled in the consecrated theatre the lesson of Mark ii. 23-28, with much-needed emphasis upon the last verse of the passage: "Asi que el Hijo del hombre es Señor aun del sabado."

II. The Beauty and Natural Resources of Cuba.

When Columbus landed in Cuba in October, 1492, he wrote to his royal patrons, respecting this island, "It is the most beautiful land that eyes ever beheld." Having lavished upon it terms of unqualified praise, he pronounced it to be "a country of such marvellous beauty, that it surpasses all others in charms and graces, as the day doth the night in lustre." Similar strains of extravagant laudation have been employed by other writers since the days of "the great admiral" who

> "Pushed his prows into the setting sun,
> And made West East."

So that, to many persons, Cuba is only another name for peerless beauty, unfading verdure, and infinite charm.

Now, it is a thankless task to dissipate pleasing notions, or dash fair visions of fancy. It is, however, only right to say that an experienced traveller

who expects to find in Cuba examples of unrivalled natural beauty, having seen with his own eyes, will be likely to leave the island "a wiser and a sadder man." But if I cannot quite accept the panegyric of Columbus, so neither can I quite agree with the author of "Cuban Sketches" in his depreciation of rural Cuba. The truth of description appears to lie between the extremes of glamour and derogation. Having seen the island in almost its entire length, from Havana to Santiago de Cuba, and quite in its extreme width, from Cardenas to Cienfuegos, I consider that *Cuba is beautiful; but not all*, and not to a degree which outrivals the beauty of many another fair land. One wonders, in fact, that Columbus, in whose "natal grove" such transporting scenes of loveliness were constantly present, should have seen in Cuba a beauty that so far outvied that of the Riviera as his comparison suggests. Was not his boyhood spent

> "In lands of palm and southern pine,
> In lands of palm, of orange-blossom,
> Of olive, aloe, and maize and vine"?

A good deal depends upon the season of the year in which Cuba is visited as to the impression produced touching its verdure. Columbus reached Baracoa just as the autumn rains had done their work of magic revival; the northern visitor of to-day goes to Cuba in the dry season, when the green of hillside has become changed to tawny brown.

The change in the appearance of the landscape is about as great as it is possible for such a change to be.

One of the chief items of disappointment in Cuban scenery is the absence of umbrageous woodlands. In the famous valley of Yumuri, and some less-known localities, fine trees may be seen, and almost everywhere the ceiba (silk-cotton tree) is in evidence —solitary and desolate looking. But the trees are generally small, and what the Cuban calls a wood, a man from Indiana would describe as "bresh"; it is little more than an entangled wilderness. A generous compensation, however, is found in the never-failing beauty and great variety of "feathery palms." Amongst the first features of the landscape to arrest the eye of the traveller, they are about the last thing to fade from his memory. To them there attaches a sort of charm that belongs to no other kind of growth. Almost every variety is here to be met with, and one soon discovers that the palms are as useful as they are beautiful. Pleasant to the eye, they also furnish material for building, for wrappers, for clothing, and even for food.

When the flora of Cuba is under consideration language can hardly be too affluent or too eulogistic. If only a moderate amount of care were given to culture and arrangement this island would be a veritable paradise of floral loveliness; this, unfortunately, is one the case. Disorder is supreme. Here

and there "a well-order'd garden" attests the richness of the soil and the kindliness of the climate, and the best results of horticulture are not unfrequently those of the Chinese gardener. It is unnecessary to catalogue—indeed it is well-nigh impossible; any and every growth known in tropical climes can be brought to perfection in the fertile soil and under the sunny skies of Cuba.

But Cuba is *not all* beautiful. Between Havana and Cienfuegos there may be encountered extensive stretches of country as dull and uninviting as any I know in any part of the world. The poverty-stricken dwellings of the Cuban peasantry add to the unpleasing aspect of the scenery.

The most beautiful districts of Cuba are those which are least known to visitors; I refer to the mountain districts. These are little likely to become known until better roads and better accommodation are provided, and until the risk which sometimes attends excursions into solitary places ceases to terrify. Brigandage as such can hardly be said to exist in Cuba, but the attitude of certain organised outlaws is sufficient to suggest caution. I owe it to the courtesy of one of the Directors of Jaragua that I became acquainted with what proved to be the finest of all the scenery I beheld in Cuba. Certainly the established routes of travel must be departed from if the choicest aspects of the island are to be en-



SOUTH COAST SCENERY, CUBA. [*To face p.* 81.

joyed. Here amongst the hills and valleys of the Sierra de Cuba, as also in the district lying north of Trinidad de Cuba, no question can arise as to the beauty of Cuba.

Most of the coast scenery of the island is very fine, while around the spacious harbours for which Cuba is famous may be found spots of sylvan loveliness. From Cape Cruz to Cape Mayzi an enchanting panorama comes into view from the steamer's deck, including Turquino (8000 feet), the loftiest mountain of Cuba.

Cuba, lying, as it does, wholly within the tropics, rejoices in the charm of nights which

> "No mist obscures, nor cloud,
> Nor speck, nor stain,
> Breaks the serene of heaven."

Descriptions of the beauty of night in the tropics are doubtless familiar enough to my readers, so that it is unnecessary that I should intrude a poor picture where so many masterly examples already abound.

In the long ago the military rulers of Cuba contrived to increase the charms of many a landscape by the situation and structure of their forts. Nowadays, what nature intended as "a thing of beauty" is often marred by either bad taste or slovenliness. In this, as in so many other matters, Cuba seems to follow the degeneracy of Spain.

Produce of the Field.

The great fertility of the soil and the excellence of the climate have led to the development of large agricultural industries. Of these, the most important is that of *sugar*. During the year 1892 the production of this article was estimated at nine hundred and sixty-six thousand tons. The small plantations have been, for the most part, abandoned; it being found impossible to compete with the best sugar produced in Europe, except by improved machinery and more economical methods of manufacture. Cuba is, at the present time, by far the largest cane-sugar producing country in the world. The great factory in the neighbourhood of Cienfuegos known as "Constancia" has lately turned out as much as forty-five million pounds of sugar in one year. Some of the cane-fields are several thousand acres in extent. The cane is brought to the factories by railways which traverse the fields in every direction. The factories are large and costly establishments, and, including their machinery, represent an outlay of from two hundred to a million of dollars respectively. Formerly, the sugar estates were mainly worked by Cuban capital; but now English capital is chiefly employed, and machinery of English make is largely used. The United States also furnish an increasing quantity of both capital and machinery. At the present time, an American

syndicate is investing several millions of capital in the establishment of a plantation and factory in the neighbourhood of Trinidad de Cuba, whilst the Bureau of Statistics shows that last year three times as much "iron and steel and manufactures thereof" were exported to Cuba from the United States as were sent thither four years ago. Nor are there any signs of decrease in sugar cultivation. Immense tracts of land still await the cultivator, and the demand for Cuban sugar shows no abatement. There is no "labour difficulty" to face, and the investment of capital in this industry meets with satisfactory returns.

Next in importance to the sugar industry comes that of *tobacco*. The plant, which is indigenous to Cuba, grows in all parts of the island; but the variety which is cultivated in the district lying west of Havana—the Vuelta Abajo, the lower valley—is that which has gained a world-wide reputation for special excellence. Thirty million pounds of leaf are said to be an average yearly production; of this a large proportion is manufactured in the factories of Cuba, and the exports increase year by year. Some of the large cigar factories in Havana, such as the "Cabanas," the "Partagas," etc., employ upward of a thousand work people, and pay an enormous sum annually in wages. In Cuba everybody smokes; some one has said that, "To a stranger smoking seems to be the great business of life."

How far the degeneration of the Cubans is to be attributed to habitual indulgence in tobacco is a question for the physiologist to settle; a justification of such excess as that which is common in Cuba would hardly be attempted by the most devoted friend of "the sublime weed."

The growth of cotton and indigo has greatly declined in recent years, and for some time the cultivation of coffee had also received less and less attention, until the production was scarcely equal to the demands of home consumption. This decline is accounted for by the success which attended the cultivation of sugar and drew off the attention of coffee growers to the more remunerative industry. Latterly, however, the production of coffee has received revived attention. Santiago and Guantanamo, which shipped only a million and a half pounds of coffee in the year 1886, have recently shipped over ten million pounds in one year, of which about six-tenths went to other ports in Cuba, the balance to France and Spain. Increased attention is also being given to the production of cocoa, which is planted so as to provide a shade for the coffee bushes. The coffee and cocoa cultivation is confined to the mountainous districts.

The fruit-growing industry of Cuba appears to be rapidly developing. The principal fruit centre is Baracoa, said to be the oldest town on the island. The present annual production of cocoanuts is esti-

mated at twenty-five million, and of bananas two million bunches. In the production of pine-apples Cuba now competes with the Bahamas, but it is more than doubtful whether it is capable of out-rivalling the reputation of the Bahamian "sugar-loaf." Thirty-five square miles of land have recently been purchased near Banes for fruit culture, and ten thousand acres at least have already been cleared and planted with bananas and other fruit-trees. Several steamers, specially constructed for the trade, are employed in conveying the luscious produce to New York.

Mineral Wealth.

The rich mineral deposits of Cuba are now being worked with an amazing energy. The old copper mines near Santiago, at one time so remunerative, are likely to be reopened—if, indeed, operations have not already commenced.

Manganese is found in certain mountain districts, and as much as twenty-five thousand tons were recently shipped in one year.

The most important mining operations, however, are those which deal with iron ore. The mines are "open"; excavations are made in the hillsides, so that shafts and tunnels are unnecessary. The ore of the Sierra Maestra range yields a large percentage of métallic iron, and the supply is abundant. The rich Bessemer iron deposits have attracted

capitalists to the district around Santiago de Cuba. Several influential companies have been formed, one of which (Jaragua) claims to have expended over three million dollars, and to have shipped about three hundred and thirty thousand tons of ore in a single year.

The foreign commerce of Cuba is double that of the aggregate of the five Central American republics, and among South American countries is only exceeded by Brazil and Argentina. Nearly one-half of its foreign trade is done with the United States.

III. Some General Impressions.

Spain Over-sea.

Some years ago I visited Spain and the French littoral extending from Marseilles to Mentone, which is largely Spanish in its general features. Immediately upon entering Cuba I was struck with the resemblance of this Spanish colony to the mother-country. It is not so much a Spanish element that one finds: it is "Spain over-sea."

The buildings are of that same heavy masonry, and of that same odd mixture of form and colour that makes, in the end, for picturesqueness. Here, too, is the same let-alone disregard for neatness and sanitation. The streets of the Cuban city present the same general appearance as those of Granada



PLAZA, SANTIAGO DE CUBA.



STREET IN SANTIAGO DE CUBA. [*To face p.* 86.

and Seville, whilst in the design and construction of the newer quarters there is the same pretentious grandeur that characterises ambitious Castilian towns.

Nor is the likeness to Spain limited to external matters; it extends to the social, moral, and religious aspects of Cuba. Here are the same suavity and grace of manners, the same dandyism and love of the meretricious, the same delight in what is obscene and impurely suggestive. The lottery-ticket vendor is ubiquitous, and dominoes and other games of chance are played with an eagerness which is insatiable. The "Continental Sabbath" is accentuated in its worst features of desecration, and religion seems best known in the form of mere parasitic superstitions. I did not see a well-filled church, but the cock-fights and bull-fights of a recent Sunday in Havana were supplemented by a balloon-ascent and parachute performance which was witnessed by a crowd of fifteen thousand persons; the performer being—I record it with shame—an *English* aeronaut! The Cuban knows of Sunday; but, apparently, he knows no Sabbath—it is to him a *dia de fiesta.*

The Negro and Insular Politics.

The negro is everywhere in Cuba, and half-castes are numerous enough. "Slavery is abolished;" so runs the phrase. How much it really means may

be ascertained by a visit to any of the great plantations. Anyhow, manacles, stocks, and whipping-posts decidedly qualify the expression "Free Cuba." Despite all that may be against him, the negro thrives in Cuba. The very climatic conditions which are against the white man are in the negro's favour. As to the prophecies which declare that "he will oust the white man," and that "Cuba will one day be a Black Republic," I can only say that I saw little and heard less that would support any such prediction. If any great political and constitutional change comes over Cuba, my judgment leads me to look for it neither in connection with negro ascendency nor with the success of insurgent arms, but in the direction of the American dollar. Autonomy would probably be little better for Cuba than the much-hated Spanish domination and the well-nigh crushing taxation of the existing *régime*. That loud and menacing dissatisfaction should prevail is only natural. The present system of government is inquisitorial, grinding, and repressive. Taxation, direct and indirect, is such as to provoke hostility and make loyalty next to impossible. It was stated before the Madrid Congress, a few years ago, that up to that time Cuba had "remitted to Spain in hard cash $137,000,000 dollars." So long as Spain maintains an army and navy as large as those of the United States, and has still to bear the burden of debts contracted by her wars in Africa and San

Domingo, the Cuban tax-payer is likely to have to complain that his island is "the most heavily taxed of all the countries of the civilised world," and that notwithstanding his large contribution to the coffers of Spain, next to nothing is being done to compensate Cuba.

Aspects of Rural Life.

The average Cuban village possesses no attractions. There is no care for what is either neat or artistic. Such of the houses as are stone built are generally ruinous and dingy, while the less substantial erections appear to invite the only improvement of which they are capable—the sweeping work of the next hurricane. For half the year the roads are thick with red dust, and for the other half begrimed with red mud. The villagers are an unwashed, indolent, gossip-loving, ill-assorted community. Streams of foul liquid ooze from suspicious-looking corners and crannies, filling the air with noisome and dangerous effluvia. Heaps of rubbish fester beneath the sun or sodden under the rain. With the exception of certain wholesome villages near to Havana, to be reckoned probably among the city's suburbs, I saw no Cuban village that was not a spot to be shunned.

All things considered, the reflection touching rural Cuba is that Nature has been lavish in her gifts, and man unappreciative and negligent. When full allowance has been made for the *ennui*

occasioned by tropical heat, and for the grinding oppression of Spanish taxation, after all one cannot suppress the unwelcome conviction that this island of rich and varied resources has been shamefully dealt with.

The life of the Cuban peasant is not a thing to be coveted. His house is a miserable shanty, his fields, thanks to his own neglect, are often over-run by vagrant pigs; the methods of agriculture which he employs are antiquated. Of domestic comfort he knows nothing; his food consists of sweet potato, plantains, rice, and sugar-cane, with an occasional taste of pork, or *tassajo* (dried cow) or *bacalao* (dried cod). He manages to exist in defiance of the laws of hygiene; he is the slave to customs which the rest of the civilised world has long discarded. His chief aversion is the Government official, his great ambition is to purchase a lottery ticket, his constant study is to avoid work. He spends his life in a sort of sullen contentment, ignorant, and devoid of aspiration.

Cuban roads are few, and atrociously bad; the *volante* is fast disappearing. The Cuban, both in town and country, is a lover of the horse, and is generally an expert rider. Carts and waggons are almost unknown; the mule, sure-footed and manageable, is the chief bearer of burdens. He is laden with produce to such an extent that usually nothing but his nose and tail are to be seen, and sometimes

carries at his side a travelling store containing dry goods, and boasting its glazed windows to boot.

Religious Names, etc.

If names meant anything, Cuba would be about the most religious country on the face of the earth. The explorers of the New World, when they "studded the map with names from the Church calendar," may have been moved by sentiments of piety, but the place names now in use in Cuba do not seem to possess any such gracious intention. Among Christian names we have Salvador (Saviour), Manuel (Emmanuel), and even Jesus; Maria, Mercedes, and Dolores; street names include "San" this and "Santa" that, La Trinadad "The Trinity), Conception, Obrapia (Pious Work Street); even in advertisements and signs some religious association figures; and as somebody has said, "The Nativity" goes for anything, down to a tobacco shop.

Excessive familiarity with what should be sacred may perhaps account for the sadly prevalent profanity of speech to which one's ears get accustomed in Cuba. Ejaculations which would horrify the average Englishman or American are only too common upon Cuban lips, even the lips of women and children.

My acquaintance with the domestic life of Cuba was quite too limited to allow me o speak of it

from personal knowledge. Report says that behind the seeming proprieties there lurks a deplorable moral evil.

The dress of the Cuban ladies is elegant, and well suited to the climate; that of the men seems to lack this adaptation, especially in the matter of hats. The dress of the negroes is often amusing. I cannot match Professor Drummond's sketch of a tropical African, "whose sole dress was a pocket-handkerchief, a little palm oil, and a few mosquitoes"; but I have seen—and that within a short distance of Havana's central park—a little "ebony cherub," whose only clothing consisted of a pair of bran new boots and a silver necklace!

In no country that I have ever visited has such lavish and uniformly courteous attention been paid me as in Cuba. No kindness that could be shown by persons to whom I was introduced by letter or otherwise was lacking, and one's thanks for kind attentions were received in a way that made it appear that the obligation was not on the part of the receiver of the kindness, but on the part of the doer of it. Designing, tricky, ready to improve an opportunity to benefit himself, the Cuban is said to be; perhaps he is, but, speaking of him as I found him, I must confess that I met with no such instance.

IV. Protestant Mission Work.

The prime object of my visit to Cuba was to ascertain what Protestant mission work was being done, and with what results and prospects. The need for some wholesome and influential spiritual labour very soon becomes evident. Flagrant desecration of the Sabbath, unblushing gambling, brutal and degrading sports, and the exposure of indecent prints, are only the outward and visible signs of moral degeneracy which is deep and wide-spread. The "Continental Sabbath" is a comparatively mild form of wantonness when appraised by the standard of Cuban desecration of the holy day—so madly defiant of all the decencies of Sabbath observance. A writer who is by no means unfavourable to the Roman Church has said: "Whether it be from want of rivals or merely from force of time, the Catholic Church in Cuba has fallen from its high estate." Probably there is another explanation which more nearly touches the true secret of its decline and fall. It has lost, if it ever possessed, "the beauty of holiness"; it lacks that preserving "salt" which was found in such as Bernard of Cluny and Fénélon of Cambray. It wants the wholesomeness which is essential to vigorous combat with worldliness and lust, and the "love" which endureth all things. It is the tool of the State, and as such is despised and discredited. With its

celibate clergy for purity, and its confessional for heart-ease, it is derided by those who should be expected to esteem it, and its priesthood is a butt for the ribaldry of every scoffing wit. Its altars are served chiefly by foreigners; it is a rare thing for an educated Cuban to enter its ministry. Established and endowed it is, as a branch of Governmental service; but it is "disestablished" in the estimation of those whom it claims as its sons, and "disendowed" of the affection of those whom it would fain have call it "Mother." This Church has had undisputed possession in Cuba for centuries, but against it there lies a terrible indictment.

It is only a few years ago that liberty of worship was granted by the revised Spanish Constitution. Now, although sympathy with evangelism is not yet forthcoming, toleration is the word of the written law. In a hundred ways which priestly ingenuity can devise, religious liberty may be interfered with, but the law professes to afford protection. This is a great point gained. Protestant teachers have only to toil on in the patience of hope and the labour of love, and the Cuban, who is indifferent to religion, rather than averse to it, will come to know who are his true friends.

Beginnings have already been made. Of these, the most conspicuously successful is the work of Pastor A. J. Diaz in Havana, to which reference has been made in an earlier chapter.

The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, has a station in Havana. The premises consist of a small hall and dwelling-house in Concordia, in the north-west quarter of the city, where the population is chiefly of the artisan class. The work has suffered through the removal of one missionary and the death of his successor. In spite of discouragements it gives evidence of vigorous life, but is still in "the day of small things."

The Jamaica Baptist Missionary Society has had a mission cause in Cienfuegos for several years. The results have not been encouraging, and it is not improbable that the station will have to be abandoned. The Presbyterians of Mexico have had one or two small missions in Cuba; and I heard of, but did not see, an Episcopal mission in Matanzas.

A good work is being done by the distribution of the Scriptures and Gospel tracts. There is now but little that can be called persecution, although considerable prejudice exists, and insult and petty annoyances have frequently to be endured. The priests are keenly sensitive, "doubting whereunto this thing may grow." The well-known tactics to which the zealots of Rome resort in order to harass and hinder the evangelist are plied without mercy; but for all that, as the result of some observation and of more inquiry, I am persuaded that "a great door and effectual is opened" in Cuba

for the preaching of a present, free, and full salvation.

At the approach of the Columbus Celebration, a divine of the Roman Church paid his tribute to the memory of the great admiral thus :—

"With faith unshadow'd by the night,
Undazzled by the day,
With hope that plumed thee for the flight,
And courage to assay,
God sent thee from the crowded ark,
Christ-bearer, like the dove,
To find, o'er sundering waters dark,
New lands for conquering love."

Alas! that the "conquering love" (?) should have carried a melancholy Gospel to these fair islands of the Caribbean! If Columbus was a saintly missionary, he fell upon a most unsaintly age. The wealth that poured into Spain upon the discovery of the New World gave the Roman Church a new lease of life after the Renaissance, but she has failed in her mission, and has not justified her pretensions; her boast of Catholicity is vain, nor do her children "call her blessed."

I venture to suggest that what is done in the way of Protestant missions in Cuba should be done on a large and generous scale. Small hired halls in out-of-the-way places neither attract the Cuban, who is a lover of the spectacular, nor do they suggest to him the idea that these evangelicals mean to stay.

With every mission set up there should be arrangements for a cemetery—a strange suggestion to those who do not know Cuba; but to such as do, an adjunct regarded as important to success in this island as are schools in India and dispensaries in China. As far as possible, Cubans should be employed as missionaries to their countrymen. There is a strong sentiment of fellowship in the Cuban mind; there are patriotic ambitions in which no foreigner can fully share. And in all labour and underlying all plans of service there must needs be a strong, fervent, and triumphant expectation of success. Protestantism, not as a mere theological negation, but as a spiritual energy, is, under God, equal to the splendid task of saving Cuba.

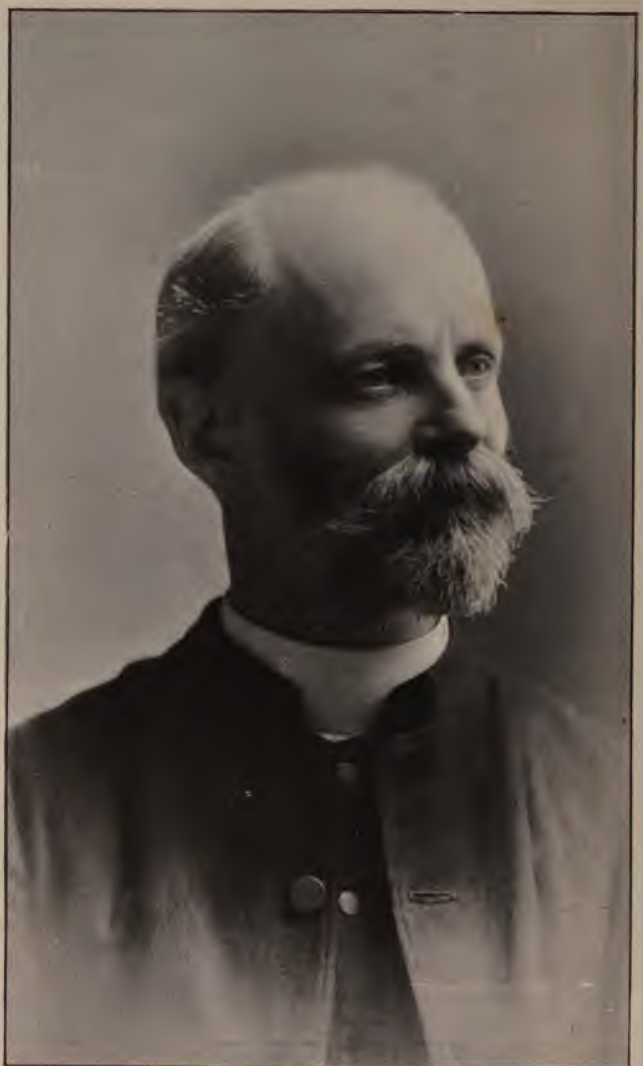
Before closing these remarks on Cuba, it may be added that the later developments of the struggle with Spanish authority still going on in the island have made the Government officials suspicious of all religious teachers save those of the Roman Church. Some of the Protestant leaders have been treated as "suspects." Pastor Diaz has been imprisoned in the Morro at Havana, but was released upon appeal, on the ground of his American citizenship. The good brother who was in charge of the Baptist mission in Cienfuegos has quitted his post, discouraged and dismayed. In fact, little as there was being done for Cuba in the name of Protestantism when the insurrection began, there is still less being done

now. But what of that? Browning has reminded us that

> "God's in His heaven; all's right with the world,"

and a greater than Browning has said: "I am with you alway."

Holding fast to our faith in the providential ordering of things, and in the guidance of the missionary impulse of His Church, the present depressed condition of evangelical religion in Cuba need not discourage us over-much. The problem of the political condition of the island once settled, missionary work by some great Protestant nation is bound to follow. One thing may be regarded as certain: Cuba can never again be held in the ecclesiastical thrall which has been her curse for centuries.



GEORGE LESTER. [*To face p.* 99.

V.

MEMORIALS OF MY MINISTRY.

I. With our Fathers and with Us.*

"The Lord our God be with us, as He was with our fathers."—1 Kings viii. 57.

THE near approach of the District Synod suggests the propriety of a short discourse on the subject of your relation as members of this Church, or at least of this congregation, to our annual assembly. It is highly important that you should be one with your pastors in striving to promote the interests of our much-blessed and beloved Church. It is not enough that there is no coldness, no estrangement; what we covet to possess, in an ever-increasing degree, is your hearty and prayerful co-operation.

You do not need to be told that these words were not spoken of Methodism. They were spoken concerning a people who were raised up, in God's great mercy, to fill a definite place in the history of religion, to whom were given unmistakable signs

* A sermon preached in Trinity Church, Nassau, on Sunday morning, January 20th, 1895, prior to the Sessions of the Annual District Synod.

of the Divine blessing and approval, and the fulfilment of whose mission was made to depend upon their fidelity to their high calling. No violence therefore will be done to this text if, for our present profit, it be used as topic for remark upon Methodism—past, present, and future.

1. *Now, there can be no doubt that the Lord our God "was with our fathers."*

The heritage which we enjoy as the result of their labours indicates how largely they were owned and blessed of God. Methodism began as a vigorous evangelism. John Wesley and the good men—both clerical and lay—who laboured with him could have had no idea as to the whereunto their work would grow. If our founder had been told that a hundred years after his death Methodism would be (at least numerically) the largest Protestant communion in the world, numbering in its various branches forty-three thousand ministers, seven million members, and many more millions of followers, surely even his great soul would have regarded the statement as quite too astounding to be accepted as a bit of sober prophesying. He had his moments of prophetic foresight, and looked for "great things"; yet it was never amongst his prognostications that that work which in the providence and grace of God he had been instrumental in beginning would have only a brief day and then collapse or be merged in some already existing branch of the Church Universal. He avowed

his attachment to the Church of England as by law established, he approved the theology of that Church as set forth in her homilies and her confessions of faith. But it is inconceivable, with the Deed of Declaration before us, with what we know of the provisions he made for the consolidation of Methodism and for the legal settlement of its properties, with his ordination of certain of his preachers also; it is inconceivable, I say, that he ever imagined that Methodism would eventually become absorbed in the "Church of his baptism." He was too far-seeing to have entertained any such expectation. The Church, which had in effect thrust him out, harassed his followers, repelled them from its altars, and branded them as "schismatics," was little likely ever to welcome back—upon any such terms as Christian dignity and prudence could approve—these thousands of people who persisted in regarding their father in the gospel as a veritable New Testament bishop, and his helpers—lay as well as clerical—as men of God, the validity of whose ministrations was, in their judgment, not open to question. And, it was as little likely that the Methodists themselves could be content to be absorbed, or to stand in the category of "poor relations." It was inevitable that, sooner or later, whether designated a "Society," a "Body," or a "Church," the responsibilities, duties, and dignities of a great Christian corporation should be assumed.

For all that, it may be frankly admitted that Methodism as the world knows it to-day is an organism, rather than an organisation. It has grown up, rather than been built up. John Wesley's masterly gift of organisation and his genius for government (which Lord Macaulay declared "was not inferior to that of Richelieu") were developed by the success which attended his zeal for the conversion of sinners. What are now among its distinguishing features—*e.g.* its class meetings, its lovefeasts, its watch-nights, yes, and even its chief methods of Church finance—did not arise of deliberate arrangement. These "blessed institutions," as we now call them, did not spring out of committees and conferences. They came into existence and finally took shape as natural developments of an inner spiritual force. Successive acts of legislation which have resulted in what we now call "the Methodist polity" were the forward movement of evangelistic vigour, or the prudential steps of a wise endeavour to conserve and direct the spiritual energy begotten of the grace and providence of God. So much so, that the Methodist constitution is only to be understood in the light of the Methodist history. With the needs of the work men arose, and methods also. The dying Wesley exclaimed, "The best of all is, God is with us"; and his spiritual children in the four quarters of the globe could scarcely find to-day a truer or a more appropriate word.

Success such as has attended our beloved Church needs always to be regarded with much humility and an unstinted acknowledgment of the grace of God. If these sentiments are not always kept permanent, there is the danger of extolling Methodism instead of praising God. The poet of Methodism—likening himself to Jacob of old—exclaimed, as he saw the goodness of God in the increase of a spiritual progeny—

> "Who, I ask in amaze,
> Hath begotten me these?
> And inquire from what quarter they came?
> My full heart replies,
> They are born from the skies,
> And gives glory to God and the Lamb.

My brethren, our praise must flow in no other channel. To God be all the glory!

2. *We solemnly invoke and humbly look for His continued presence:* "*The Lord our God be with us.*"

As to the present and the immediate future grave responsibilities rest upon us as a people. The precise kind of work that our fathers did may not be, for the most part, the work most needing to be done to-day and to-morrow. The conditions of life both in England and in her older colonies are not those which met the eyes of John Wesley and John Nelson in Great Britain and Ireland, of Coke and Asbury in America, of Samuel Leigh and

Walter Lawry in the Southern Seas, and of William Turton and William Dowson in the Bahamas. Various causes have operated to change the aspect of society and to bring about the betterment of the people; but nothing that has occurred in the way of social transformation in the Bahamas has either made our presence here a superfluity, or in any degree lessened our obligation as Methodist Christians "to spread Scriptural holiness throughout" these islands of the sea.

If we are to fulfil our mission we must needs have the continued presence of Almighty God. We cannot live and grow upon the blessed successes of bygone days. As well might trees hope to be fruitful, or flowers to bloom upon the rains and sunshine of half a century ago, as we expect to thrive upon stories of old-time revivals. It is that "I am with you alway" of the Saviour's promise upon which we depend. John Wesley concluded his "Twelve Rules of a Helper" with these characteristic and significant words: "Therefore you will need all the grace and all the sense you have; and to have all your wits about you." Yes, that is it: not merely "sense" and "wits," but "all the grace you have." It is not a question simply of good judgment and mental alertness and tact; it is a question of imparted spiritual power and zeal. Our fathers were wise and shrewd—"smart men"—but they were something more than that: God

was "with them." They knew this; they felt it, and rejoiced in it. It was this that breathed itself into the hymns which they composed, and sang with such transporting effect. What is it but this that we discover (without searching for it) in such hymns as "Oh for a thousand tongues to sing" and "Shall I, for fear of feeble man, the Spirit's power in me restrain?" and the solemn, stirring stanzas—which somebody has called "The Methodist Marseillaise"—"A charge to keep I have"? If every page of old-time Methodist history were burnt to-morrow, and every vestige of Methodist biography were gone, with that hymn book amongst us we should have no manner of doubt as to what was at once the secret of their marvellous power and the spring of their rapturous joy.

If we are to have God with us we must qualify for the fellowship. We must neither forsake the old fountain, nor be morally unable to avail ourselves of its life-giving streams. If you covet to have God with you you must be content to be with God. He withdraws Himself from such as disown Him and dishonour Him. What is it but this that the story of ancient Israel teaches with such terrible emphasis? And how did it come about that the once flourishing Christianity of Northern Africa was devastated by Islam? That to-day the scenes of labour of Augustine and Cyprian are dominated not by the cross but by the

crescent? You know how it came about. Neither the passion of the propagandist nor the cold steel of Moslem soldiers could have prevailed to turn "the parts of Lybia about Cyrene" from fealty to Jesus Christ had not those who bore His name become first of all untrue to Him. The fact is, the infidelity of African Christendom explains the triumph of Mohammedism.

What we need to-day—what Evangelical Christianity the wide world over needs—is fidelity. Oh, let us not cast away our confidence, for it has great recompense of reward. It was the man who had said in the presence of allurement and opposition and threats," None of these things move me," who could say, at the end of life, "I have kept the faith." The great deposit of the grace of God in Methodism is unworldliness. The familiar words of our vocabulary (they are almost our Shibboleth) are words which suggest a coming out for Christ's sake. Association with our Church does not rest upon doctrinal subscription, nor upon knowing the alphabet of Christian truth, but upon godly decision, a coming out, a giving up.

I read these "Rules of the Society" and what do I find? Here and there an anachronism? Possibly. On this page and on that a line which even John Wesley would not write down were he now preparing his conditions of fellowship? Perhaps so. But one thing there is so present, so pervasive,

so precious that I cannot mistake it: it is this idea of separateness for Christ's sake and for salvation's sake. Surely he spoke well and truly who said, "Keep our rules, and our rules will keep you."

If we know our place and value our mission we shall resort to no casuistry, we shall seek for no lightening of the blessed burden (if "burden" it be); we shall see rather that, at all costs, our spirituality must be maintained, and that our ordinances which make for sprituality are to be cherished and improved.

If we are content to be with God that so God may be with us we shall have no doubt about Methodism being—what John Wesley delighted to call it—"the work of God." To be sneered at as "schismatics" and to be relegated by some to "the uncovenanted mercies of God" may pain us, but will not hurt us. The tokens of our true churchmanship will appear in our holy lives; the validity of our sacramental ordinances will show itself in our converted children and in our refreshed souls; the Church we love and honour will have both men and means; the vigour of our evangelism will find its harvest in multitudes of converted sinners; He who is with us will make "crooked things straight and rough places plain and the glory of the Lord will be revealed." Fully consecrated, we shall sing as they sang of the olden-time, whose children we are:—

"The presence divine
Doth inwardly shine,
The Shechinah shall rest
On all our assemblies, and glow in our breast;
By day and by night
The pillar of light
Our steps shall attend
And convoy us safe to our prosperous end."

II. An Ordination Charge.*

"Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it."—Col. iv. 17.

My dear Brother,—The solemn function of this day is the token of your admission into full connection with the ministry of our Church. You have passed the series of tests which your fathers and brethren have seen good to apply to you, in common with others, first as a candidate for our ministry and then as a "preacher on trial." In each and all of these tests, by examination and otherwise, you have honourably fulfilled what has been required of you; and by the vote of the ministers assembled in the last Conference you were received into the brotherhood of the Wesleyan ministry. It is in furtherance of that act of your fathers and brethren in England that we are here and now assembled.

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* Delivered to the Rev. John Keddie on his Ordination to the Christian Ministry, Trinity Church, Nassau, N.P., Bahamas, January 22nd, 1895.



A GROUP AT SYNOD TIME, NASSAU.

[*To face p.* 108.

It will not be inopportune to recall the progress of events which has brought you to this solemn hour. To do so will be to show that hands have not been suddenly laid upon you (1 Tim. v. 22). Of your Christian baptism, of your godly training, and of your conversion to God it is not necessary that I should now speak.

In the first instance you were a local preacher: no man enters our ministry who has not first employed his gifts in that capacity. You were nominated as a candidate for this ministry by your superintendent, and recommended by your own circuit quarterly meeting: without such recommendation no minister or number of ministers could introduce a young man to our ministry—he must needs be approved *by the Church* of which he is a member. Thus recommended, you were examined at the Edinburgh and Aberdeen District Synod in the evidences and doctrines of Christianity, as to your conversion, your religious experience and your "call" to the ministry. Being approved by the Synod, you passed a more extensive examination (literary and theological) before an influential committee appointed by the British Conference; you preached several trial sermons, besides submitting one in *MS.*; you were accepted by the Conference of 1887, and proceeded to our Didsbury College, where three years were devoted to the study of divinity, and such other subjects as are judged

to be serviceable in preparation for the work of the ministry. For that course of systematic study you will ever have cause to be thankful, whilst, among the precious memories of the past, none will be more fondly cherished than your Didsbury associations, tutors, students, etc.

Upon leaving college you entered on your probation; and during the four years now completed it has been required of you that each year you should pursue a course of theological reading, and be examined in the sacred languages, in Holy Scripture, and in certain books prescribed by the Conference, dealing with theology, Church History, the Methodist Polity, and the like.

Thus for the past eight or nine years you have been preparing for your life-work. You will not imagine that, now that the period of probation is over, you may cease to be a student. We are persuaded better things of you. Your own good sense, your conception of ministerial fitness, and your love of study will doubtless save you from falling into any such snare. But more of this, perhaps, hereafter.

The first and last acts in your candidature have been taken by the *pastors* of our Church. But the responsibility of recognising your fitness for the ministerial office is a joint responsibility; we share it with our people. Your ordination is not performed in private, and the presence of this company

(amongst whom are many fellow-workers) supplies an important factor in the solemn proceedings of this day: it means that they and we recognise in you one to whom it is right and proper to entrust the sacred duties of the Christian ministry.

Let me remind you of *what is intended* by this act of Ordination. In doing so it may be well, first, to indicate one or two things which are not intended, which in fact we distinctly disallow. You are not this day constituted a priest. We have no love for the word, as applied to the Christian pastor, and as for the theory which the word suggests, we repudiate it as unscriptural. As for the oft-quoted line from one of Milton's Sonnets, "New Presbyter is but old Priest writ large," it ought never to be instanced by way of justifying the use of the word priest; because, as a matter of fact, Milton is referring to the tyranny of the Long Parliament divines. In the "Form for Ordaining Candidates for the Wesleyan Methodist Ministry" no such word occurs. The priesthood of our Lord Jesus Christ we thankfully recognise: God give us to largely enjoy its inestimable blessings! We also recognise a priesthood which is common to all believers (1 Peter ii. 9), but which is not the special prerogative of the ministry. Beyond these, we know nothing of priests, or of a priestly function.

It is not intended that we claim for you that you are in the "Apostolic succession," as that phrase

goes. If the theory of which some make so much could be established—which it cannot—we fail to see that anything is gained except a mere curiosity of Christian archæology. Campbell of Aberdeen once conducted an inquiry respecting "Apostolic succession" by putting three questions: Where is it? How is it? What is it? He concluded his inquiry thus: "We find, therefore, that it is a something nobody knows where, contrived and produced nobody knows how, and leading to consequences nobody knows what."

If an "unbroken line" exists, certainly it is untraceable; and if certainty is not to be attained the theory, even as a theory, is worthless. You will in an instant recognise the quality of such logic as this (it is a case of begging the whole question): "Without the Apostolic succession our claims cannot be well founded: our claims are well founded; therefore there must be the Apostolic succession."

The putting forward of such high claims will often pain you, and will sometimes vex you; but it need never disconcert you, or lead you for a moment to question the validity of your own orders as a minister of the Gospel. It may be worth your while to remember that some of the most learned and devout of English Churchmen have acknowledged the validity of such orders as our beloved Church recognises (Hooker, Jewell, Whitgift, Bancroft, Hall, Andrewes, Ussher, Whately, Perowne, etc). Upon

a full examination of the whole matter for yourself, you will most likely endorse the conclusion of Mr. Wesley, who has said, "I never could see it proved; and I am persuaded I never shall." As for Mr. Wesley's "*Korah* Sermon," it will give you no disquiet when once you ascertain the circumstances which led to its composition, and what is the real point of objection and protest which the author raises.

A true successor of the Apostles you may be, and are, in so far as you are actuated by their motives, moved by their spirit, constrained by their sense of duty, and made courageous by their example. You can afford to leave "the figment of the succession" to those who make much of it (much good may it do them!), if only in the possession and exercise of true ministerial gifts you neither "run in vain nor labour in vain."

Nor are you, by any act of this day, made a partaker of spiritual gifts, passing to you in some mechanical way by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. That a great blessing to you will both accompany and follow the proceedings of this day there can be no doubt. The measure of that blessing will be chiefly determined by your own faith and your fresh surrender to the call and claim of Christ. The part which your fathers and brethren take in the office of ordination is not a dumb show. If it were that, then it had been better that we had

never come together. We do, indeed, commit to you a great trust, and welcome you to a brotherhood than which there is none more genuine or more to be coveted in all the fraternities or guilds that this world knows. But we impart no grace; we do not even communicate some intellectual endowment. No one will be able to go from this service and say that you are "a man-made minister." He that called you is faithful. It is in His acceptance of your vows and prayers, by His impartation of grace, and strength, and courage, and obedience, that the day which witnesses your ordination will also witness your betterment as a Christian and as a minister. We pray that His gifts to you may be so fresh and large, so comforting and soul-assuring, that this service may be to you a life-long memory and inspiration.

You are not made to-day a "lord over God's heritage." We hold no such position ourselves: we confer no such authority upon you. The duties now entrusted to you are not those of lordship, but of leadership. Pastoral authority you must needs have; but, in all, it is stewardship. The responsibilities entrusted to you and accepted by you this day are both large and heavy; you cannot treat them either lightly or wantonly. But pastoral authority aims at order, health, and purity in the Church, and is not in itself either absolute or arbitrary: "Not for that we have dominion over

your faith, but are helpers of your joy." Whatever may be meant by binding and loosing or the "power of the keys," it is certainly not a sacerdotal prerogative.

In indicating what is not intended by your ordination I am not hinting that you either have fallen or are very likely to fall into error as to the nature of the Christian ministry. But the occasion of our coming together furnishes an opportunity for the disavowal of theories and assumptions with which we, in common with evangelical ministers generally, have no sympathy, but rather an aversion; theories and assumptions which have provoked strong resentment in many minds, and must be held largely responsible for that impeachment of a separate ministry which we seriously deplore.

Your first and greatest work is to be a preacher, and in that work your first and greatest business is to preach Christ. There are a thousand topics that you may omit from your pulpit themes and your people will suffer little, if any, by the omission. But unless your sermons are full of Christ those who hear you will lack food for the soul. You have lately met with the expression "Christo-centric." That word expresses what I conceive to be the proper quality of good preaching. Within the wide circumference of truth and duty, of experience and hope, there is nothing that may not receive the light and feel the warmth of the central Sun—"the Sun of

Righteousness." Its centripetal force is competent to counteract the force of all contrary tendency and (to use Gambold's phrase) to "make one thing of all theology."

It is not, however, the preaching of Christ "in the letter" that will suffice. The mere Christ of dogma neither saves men nor feeds them. "It is the Spirit that giveth life." Evangelical platitude is as soulless as any other kind of dulness. A sermon may be full of orthodox commonplaces and yet be powerless to arouse or to edify. It may not be wise to avoid familiar and time-honoured phrases and to substitute for them a currency which bears no image and superscription but that of your own mint; even in this connection some weight may be attached to the well-known remark, that "what is new is not true, and what is true is not new."

Your constant aim must be to present to those who hear you, in the most effective manner possible to you, the Gospel of the grace of God. The cross of Christ, of course, but not His cross alone. His incarnation and His life among men, His teaching and His miracles, His resurrection and ascension, and His mediatorial reign—all this must come within the scope of your teaching. Let me urge you to give special prominence to the person and work of the Holy Ghost. There is the more need for doing this from the fact that you are an evangelical minister,

And now, my brother, I must shortly conclude. Is it strange that one who has known this ministry for thirty years, one whose family traditions, running back through four generations, are more connected with our beloved Church than with any other one thing in the world, should feel to-night as he looks you in the face the joy and the solicitude of an elder brother? May I not rejoice if you are glad and thankful? And, indeed, I do rejoice with you. This is no time for flattery; but there is nothing in the solemnities of the occasion that forbids the expression of honest commendation. I know you; for have you not been for fifteen months an inmate of my house? I know your manner of life, your habits and methods of study, your ideal of ministerial excellence, and your honest endeavours to be "a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." God bless you. It is no easy road that lies before you as a Christian minister. Your methods are of course open to fair and outspoken remark, and no man with the heart of a man in him will be either greatly surprised or unduly pained by honest criticism of his methods. As a public man you must bear the penalty of publicity. But this is what will pain you—for who is the minister who has not been pained by such treatment?—there will be some (yes, and some, perhaps, who ought to do better) who will question your motives, who will impute to you feelings and

purposes, aims and ambitions, of which you know yourself to be innocent. Your very character may possibly be impugned, evil reports may possibly be put into circulation respecting you, and there are plenty of people ready to believe evil of a minister.

Your work, too, whilst it is the noblest to which a man can aspire, is (without exception) the most terribly serious business to which mortal ever addressed himself. I speak not of its hardships and privations: were they ten times in excess of what they are you are no man if you sit down and whimper over them. That which at times half-o'erwhelms my own soul, that which I think of as the real burden of your life, and which you will more and more realise as such, is "the burden of souls." It would not surprise me if an almost crushing sense of your own unfitness and weakness to fulfil such a charge as is assigned to you, and of which this ordination service is the outward and visible sign of assignment, were to take possession of your mind to-night, and yet again as months and years go on. He is a poor minister who knows nothing of these misgivings. Zeal, prudence, scholarship, and all else that you have or may have, will not save you from this. If you should ever become a stranger to it, then beware. It would be no kindness in me to speak soft things to you to-day. Rather would I seek to stir you up, and my brethren, and myself to a realisation of the awful significance

of what it is to be a minister of the Gospel. Oh, the souls that may be saved or ruined, cheered or saddened, developed or dwarfed, by you, by us!

Again I say "God bless you." We may often meet again in the course of fraternal association: I hope it may be so. But, anyhow, we shall meet again. We shall meet at the judgment bar of our Lord and Master. Compared with that tribunal the sacred jealousy with which we inquire as to each other's fidelity, and the solemn investigations of our Annual Synod are as nothing. "Who may abide the day of His coming, or who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a refiner's fire."

It is in no morbid mood, but with a becoming sense of the responsibility of the work, in which from this day forward you are fully one with us, that I charge you in the words of my text: "Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, to fulfil it."

By the mother who prayed for you, by the father whose godly integrity you revere, by the ministers who encouraged your candidature, believing you to be called of God to this ministry, by your memories of the best and strongest of Didsbury, by the Church who receives and welcomes you, by the Synod in which you are no longer a probationer, but a fully accredited minister, by the Holy Bible—your text-book and your final appeal in all matters of faith and practice—by God your Father, by Jesus Christ yo

Saviour, by the Holy Ghost your Comforter, Guide, and Sanctifier, by all that is worthy to be had in reverence in earth and heaven, I charge you "Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, to fulfil it."

III. "Baptized for the Dead." *

"Baptized for the dead."—1 Cor. xv. 29.

It is not surprising that an expression so striking and so singular should have received numerous and various explanations. It is confessedly a difficult passage, although one thinks it may have been clear enough to those to whom this Epistle first came.

That a practice did at one time obtain of baptizing a living person in the stead of some dead or dying convert who had not received the Christian rite is beyond question. Chrysostom and Epiphanius, who wrote in the fourth century, allude to such a practice; but they refer to it as practised by small heretical sects—followers of Marcion or Cerinthus—and they refer to it in the first place to ridicule it, and in the other to show its connection with false doctrine. There may have been an appropriate and innocent custom of vicarious baptism in Corinth in St. Paul's day of which this later practice among the sects was

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* A sermon preached in Trinity Church, Nassau, on Sunday morning, November 15th, 1896.



TRINITY CHURCH, NASSAU. [*To face p.* 120.

nothing better than a farcical revival; but there is no proof of the observance of such a ceremony among the early Christians generally.

Probably, there is no reference at all in these words to actual baptism by water, and that the allusion is purely figurative. It may refer to the baptism of blood and martyrdom; but then one asks, How can those who were willing to expose themselves to the most cruel and painful modes of death for Christ's sake be said to be "baptized for the dead"—*i.e.*, "on behalf of the dead ones"?

If this is a figurative allusion (and I think it is), then it may be applied appropriately to those who, nothing doubting but that there was a resurrection and a life eternal, took their stand among the followers of Jesus and thus filled the places left vacant by those who (by martyrdom or otherwise) passed from the toils and sufferings of earth to be with Christ, "which is far better." This interpretation is approved by Mr. Wesley—no mean authority on questions of interpretation. This is his comment: "Baptized for the dead. Perhaps baptized in hope of blessings to be received after they are numbered with the dead; or" (and here he follows Dr. Doddridge), "baptized in the room of the dead—of them that are just fallen in the cause of Christ: like soldiers who advance in the room of their companions, that fell just before their face."

That there should be found, in those days of

martyrdom, those who were ready to fill the gap was, certainly, something in favour of the Christian doctrine of resurrection. St. Paul "appeals to the conduct of Christians as a witness to their belief." Can it be, he seems to ask, that this succession of Christian converts, who are prepared to risk everything for their faith in the life to come, is the outcome of a vain delusion? Nay; neither is "preaching vain," nor "faith vain," nor the continuity of suffering discipleship vain. Everything, he triumphantly claims, supports the fact that the dead will rise—a fact of which the resurrection of Christ is at once the demonstration of its possibility and the pledge of its certainty.

None of you will be surprised that such a subject should have been selected for meditation and appeal to-day. It is as appropriate as it is necessary.

It has not often happened in Nassau that inside one short year this little city has lost by death so many of its prominent and respected citizens, this Trinity congregation so many of its useful members, and our family circles so many whose presence added a charm to our social life. 1896 will long be remembered as phenomenal in the legacy of sorrow it bequeathed to us.

In all this the word which of all others seems most appropriate is that suggested by our text: "Baptized for the dead."

"*The Dead.*"

We miss our beloved and lost friends. We miss them from the place they filled in the home, in our "holy convocations," and in the service and support of the Church.

Yet we know that they have not ceased to be:

> "There is no Death! What seems so is transition.
> This life of mortal breath
> Is but a suburb of the life elysian,
> Whose portal we call Death."

We know that "them that believe do enter into rest"; that "there remaineth a rest to the people of God." We miss them, but they have found blissful associates, a purer fellowship, a loftier service. Would we have them back again? Yes; when we are morbid and selfish, and lonely and weak. Would we have them back again? No; not when we think of the sorrow and burden from which God's call has set them free; not when we reflect that what seemed to us an accident was no accident at all, but part of the great plan and purpose of the Almighty concerning them; not when we contemplate the felicities they have already begun to enjoy, and the larger felicities which await them in the ever-increasing rapture of that other life. How could we, with the New Testament in our hands, wish them back again to resume the pilgrimage of life, to take on again its burden,

to renew the struggle with sins and doubts and fears, and to cross for a second time the valley of the shadow, with all that that means of pangs of parting and of physical distress? *No.* We bless God, rather, who has "delivered them out of the miseries of this sinful world," and sing:

"The exile is at home,
O nights and days of tears!
O longings not to roam!
O sins, and doubts, and fears!
What matters now? O joyful day!
The King has wiped all tears away!"

"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord."

And we *cannot* have them back even if we would. The word which called them from us is final and irrevocable. How near their spirits may be to us as we pursue the march of life who knows? Who shall dare to set narrow limits to our confession of faith when we say, "I believe in the communion of saints"?

But to have them "back again" in any of those old familiar forms and ways which belong to mortal sight and hearing, *that* we cannot. It is not a small thing to us that we have *had* them and loved them and given them back to God. So long as they were with us they

"Tried each art, reproved each dull delay,
Allur'd to brighter worlds, and led the way."

We were the richer by their presence, and are the poorer for their departure.

"*Baptized for the Dead.*"

There is, at least, one thing we can do; it is that which our text refers to: we can be "baptized for the dead."

It is given to us to take up the colours that have fallen from their dead hands and to carry them forward towards the hour and shout of victory; given to us to take up the sword and trowel with which they warded off the spoiler and built the wall of the city of God. To sit down and mourn and weep is *not all* that pertains to the hour of bereavement. We must *work* as well as weep.

The first stone of St. Paul's Cathedral in London was laid on June 25th, 1675; the work was completed in 1710. During the thirty-five years of its erection it had but one architect, but one master-builder, and but one bishop presiding over the diocese. But no one man will see the completion of Christ's Spiritual Temple in the world. Its foundations were laid before our day, and generations of builders will have come and gone before "the head-stone is brought on with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it" (Zech. iv. 7).

Never imagine, however, that though God's workmen are buried His work will fail. That is quite impossible. I cannot share in the all too gloomy and timid fears that some persons seem to entertain as to the future of evangelical religion and of this

Church in particular. Such fears cannot survive if only we have a true and lively faith in God. Our comfort for the present and our hope for the future is that before the risen Christ left His Church and people on earth He said, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world," and the witnessing Church responds to that stimulating and ever-refreshing assurance, saying "Amen."

The question is not: Will God's work go on, but will you—the heirs to the promise—take your part in it? Will you be "baptized for the dead?" Of old time the question was not whether the throne of David should continue, but whether the children of the man after God's own heart would qualify for the trust and the dignity (Psalm cxxxii. 11, 12). And *that* is the question for you to-day. Everything is in your favour. Rich in the legacy of a pious parentage and dowered with possibilities of Christian devotion and Christian service, it needs not that you

> "Break your birth's invidious bar
> And grasp the skirts of happy chance,
> And breast the blows of circumstance,
> And grapple with your evil star."

No; everything is in your favour. Your family traditions and your family sentiments, all that comes both of heredity and of environment; everything indicates your opportunity, as it points your duty and emphasises your responsibility.

It is then with you, the children of parents passed,

or passing to the skies, that I plead this day. I call upon you by the inspiring character and tendency of the faith your parents cherished, by the gracious consolations and hopes which sustained them amid the manifold changes and chances of this mortal life, by the blessed certainty of those eternal things for the sake of which they confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims here, by the sweetness and consistency of their lives, and by the grace which made them triumphant over death. I call upon you to be "baptized for the dead."

Some of you have already lost the morning of life in indecision; but it is not yet quite too late. The Master even at the eleventh hour, if you are willing, will send you to work in His vineyard.

"Listen! the Master beseecheth,
Calling each one by his name;
His voice to each loving heart reacheth,
Its cheerfulest service to claim.
Go where the vineyard demandeth
Vinedressers' nurture and care;
Or go where the white harvest standeth,
The joy of the reaper to share.
Then work, brothers, work! let us slumber no longer,
For God's call to labour grows stronger and stronger;
The light of this life shall be darkened full soon,
But the light of the better life resteth at noon."

But some of you are in the pride and promise of youth. You have been blessed with exceptional advantages—educational, social, and other. You

owe it, under God, to your parents' diligence, thrift, and godliness that you start in life with larger advantages than any which they enjoyed. If they had not been what they were you would not have been what you are to-day. You will not, surely, abuse the advantages which they toiled to secure for you; that would be base and ungrateful. For their sakes, I beseech you to dedicate yourselves to Christ. Better, a thousand times better, that your father should have been a poor planter on some out-island all his days, and that you should have succeeded to his obscure and honest toils as a simple-minded Christian, than that he should have given you an education which shall have assisted you to acquire the faculty for doubting "the truth as it is in Jesus," and made a fortune for you to waste in the follies of sin. Better that you should be a horny-handed son of toil with the love of God in your soul, than that you should be a gentleman as to dress and good manners but destitute of piety and the fear of God. It need not be so. There is nothing in education and money that need make you either infidel or spendthrift. Ignorance and poverty are not the *open sesame* to faith and virtue; culture and wealth ought not to obscure faith or make cross-bearing abhorrent. Get religion and you will be safe; get enough of it and you will be happy.

In this high work you must begin where your father began—at the cross of Christ. For the



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culture of your soul you must follow him in his endeavours after the Christian life, prizing the word of God, improving the "means and ministries of grace," and resolving not to lose your soul even to gain the whole world.

Soon *your* life-day will be over, and your eternal weal or woe pronounced. Time is too precious to be frittered away in aimless, Christless pursuits. Oh, be true to those higher instincts within your soul, which are nothing less than the motions of God's Holy Spirit. "Seek the Lord while He may be found; call ye upon Him while He is near."

As for those whom we "have loved long since and lost awhile," what can we say that is better than the familiar words: "We bless Thy holy Name for all Thy servants departed this life in Thy faith and fear, beseeching Thee to give us grace so to follow their good example, that with them we may be partakers of Thy heavenly kingdom. Grant this, O Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our only Mediator and Advocate.—AMEN."

IV. THE BIBLE IN THE BAHAMAS.*

YOUR EXCELLENCY, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—This Auxiliary of the British and Foreign Bible Society

* An address delivered at the annual meeting of the Bahamas Auxiliary of the British and Foreign Bible Society held in St. Andrew's Hall, Nassau, on January 15th, 1897; His Excellency Sir W. F. Haynes-Smith, K.C.M.G., presiding.

is to be congratulated, Sir, upon the fact of your presence in that chair to-night. And, if it be not an impertinence on my part, I will venture to say that Her Majesty's representative in this colony in no way lowers the dignity of his high office when he graciously associates himself with a Society which has done, and is doing, so much towards blessing Her Majesty's vast empire and promoting a unifying sentiment of the best kind in the hearts of millions who own allegiance to Her Majesty's throne and person.

My theme is *The Bible in the Bahamas.* It is not easy to realise that these islands—now so peaceful, with the church-going bell sounding through every town and every settlement, no matter how remote and small—it is not easy, I say, to realise that these islands have known strife as cruel, and atrocities as horrible, as any that this world has to tell of. At the head and front of these horrors stands Spain: she of the Inquisition and the Armada. With all the charity one can command, and making all allowance for the "ruling ideas" of by-gone centuries, it is impossible to think of Spain with complacency. Greedy of gain, inhuman in her savage pursuit of it, and prodigal in her use of it, what wonder that a retributive Providence has visited arrogance and cruelty with conspicuous chastisement! What wonder that the throne of haughty Philip has come to be regarded as the monument of defeated ambitions,

and a standing witness to the impolicy of arrogant oppression!

How much or how little the perversion of Christianity in Spain may have had to do in hastening her humiliation I will not pretend to determine; but no one who reads history as we read it can wholly dissociate her blind fidelity to Rome from her overbearing treatment of her dependencies.

In his lecture on "The First Hundred Years of the Church of England in the Bahamas" the Rev. C. C. Wakefield quotes the following words from a book written by a Spaniard on "Early Missions to the New World": "My countrymen have always had three objects in view when taking possession of a new country. Firstly, they look for gold; secondly, they scandalise the natives by their immoral conduct; and thirdly, they endeavour to convert them to their religion by tormenting them to death."

Speaking at the Convention of the Brotherhood of St. Andrew held in Boston in 1892, the Bishop of Mississippi said: "Those gentlemen of Spain who followed in the wake of Columbus brought priests and crucifixes to convert, as well as soldiers and pikes to kill, the original American. . . . One is shocked," he goes on to say, "at the true story of the discovery and settlement of this hemisphere. There is not among human records a more bloody, cruel, and brutal chapter."

No indictment, so far as I know, can be brought

against Columbus as to his dealings with the Carib Indians of these islands. His treatment of them appears to have been humane enough; albeit his description of these aborigines, as forwarded to his royal patrons, smacks strongly of worldly cunning, and in these days of hyper-sensitiveness would, I fancy, be denounced as "cant." It cannot be assumed that in the matter of dealing with subject races English hands have been so clean as to be held free from reproach. Not that; but this I say: that these islands of the western tropics knew a rueful *régime* in the old days of Spanish occupation.

When Columbus left his caravel and set foot on Guanahani (which he named San Salvador) he is said, by one historian, to have "set up a rude cross" upon these western shores, in token that from henceforth they were to be Christian. The true day for the Bahamas dawned with the introduction of the open Bible, and the incoming of such agencies as assort with the cardinal truths of Protestant faith.

> "Heaven-sweet Evangel, ever-living word,
> Who whilome spakest to the South in Greek
> About the soft Mediterranean shores,
> And then in Latin to the Latin crowd,
> As good need was—thou hast come to talk our isle.
> Hereafter thou, fulfilling Pentecost,
> Must learn to use the tongues of all the world."

It is not denied that the Bahamas, in common with other Spanish possesions, got the Bible, in a certain way; but not according to the fundamental object

that this Society has in view; not according to the Protestant recognition of the right of private judgment. I am not outraging the genius of the Bible Society in speaking thus. This Society in its constitution, its aims, and its methods is suffused with the spirit of Luther and the British Reformers.

Now, Protestantism means an open Bible; Romanism does not mean that; it never has meant it and it never can. The contention between Rome and Protestantism as to the free circulation of the Scriptures without note or comment is an old one, not a thing of to-day. From our point of view Spain did not give, and does not give the Bible to the people. I ask any person who reads the Society's reports, and its periodical publications, to say from whom the most persistent opposition to our colporteurs in Europe and elsewhere comes. You know from whom it comes, and we do not question the truthfulness of those reports.

The period of the buccaneers in the Bahamas furnishes a story which is well-nigh as dismal as that which has just been reviewed. How those pirates and cut-throats dealt with the settlers upon these islands you, who have read that history of robbery and atrocity, know full well.

There was much need for a vigorous evangelism in these islands of the sea. The state of affairs in the Bahamas even a hundred years ago was very different from that which we witness to-day. What

the condition of the colony was at that time may be ascertained by reference to a quite independent and trustworthy witness; the then Attorney-general makes the following remarks at the foot of a list of offences prosecuted in the General Court at Nassau, between November Term, 1799, and May Term, 1800: "Now it appears by the above list that piracies, murders, stabbings, riots and libels, tarring and feathering, assaults on magistrates and other public officers, enticing seamen from the king's ships, opposing by force of arms officers of His Majesty's navy in the due and regular discharge of their duty, barbarity to prisoners of war, and other offences are not uncommon things in these islands."

Now, that is a sad and humiliating disclosure of the life of this colony as it existed one hundred years ago. It is a picture of lawlessness and violence which, thank God, belongs to the past. The darkest of criminal lists nowadays is almost brightness itself compared with such blackness. If to-day we have little occasion to be proud we have plenty of call to be thankful. The lamented Earl of Shaftesbury, speaking of the good done in London by the London City Mission, once said: "If this Mission has not made the metropolis a city of angels, it has at any rate helped to save it from becoming a city of devils." That is what we claim for the work of the Bible and of evangelical agencies in the Bahamas.

The improved condition of our people morally and religiously is not to be attributed exclusively to any one redeeming agency—however vigorous, however largely owned and blessed of God. We give all possible credit to whatever makes for righteousness; and we are, or ought to be, the readiest of all men to acknowledge the good that has come to the colony from a purer official life, from an increase of police and magisterial vigilance, from a more wholesome public sentiment, and from the fact that "the schoolmaster is abroad." All this has, doubtless, contributed to a great extent to the improvement over which we rejoice. But it remains a fact that no small part of the colony's betterment has come both directly and indirectly from the presence among us of God's Holy Book, which is, like the leaves of the apocalyptic tree, "for the healing of the nations."

In its general appearance and external form this Book differs but little from other books. As it comes from the warehouse of the Society, in the English version, the book contains seven hundred and seventy-three thousand six hundred and ninety-two words; the whole of which may be read, slowly and with attention and care, in sixty-two hours. But within those narrow limits lie "laws from heaven for life on earth."

The nation or country which makes that Book the foundation of its laws, its ethics, its sentiments, is

destined to prosper. The Church which in its doctrines and ordinances, its discipline and its fellowship, is full of it cannot fail. The individual who submits to its authority and enlightenment his will, affections, and conscience, is sure to find the way of peace and "the holy hill of God."

Make the Book the vehicle of priestcraft, or the camping ground of hostile partisanship, or the field of flippant criticism, and its power to elevate, to guide and to save is gone.

APPENDIX A.

POPULATION OF THE ISLANDS OF THE BAHAMAS.

NAME OF ISLAND.	TOTAL NUMBER IN 1891	INCREASE	DECREASE.
Abaco and Cays	3686	76	
Andros Island	4589	1155	
Berry Islands	215	30	
Biminis	566		97 *
Cay Sal and Cay Lobos	30	9	
Eleuthera	7358	348	
Exuma and Cays	2915	825	
Grand Bahama	1269	379	
Harbour Island	1472		498 *
Inagua	998		85 †
Long Island	3174	601	
Long Cay, Acklin's Island, Crooked Island	2934	820	
Mayaguana	265	19	
New Providence	10914		739 ‡
Rum Cay	402	35	
Ragged Island	348	77	
Spanish Wells	414		26 *
San Salvador	5244	1018	
Watling's Island	772	97	
	47565	5489	1445

* Decrease occasioned by emigration to Key West.
† ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, Haiti.
‡ ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, Key West and Cuba.

APPENDIX B.

WESLEYAN MISSIONARIES WHO HAVE LABOURED IN THE BAHAMAS, WITH DATE OF APPOINTMENT.

(Not including some stationed in Bermuda and Turks Islands, which at one time formed part of the Bahamas District.)

1800 William Turton
1804 John Rutledge
1812 William Dowson
1815 Joseph Ward
1816 Michael Head
1816 Roger Moore
1816 William Wilson (2)
1818 John Turtle
1818 John Davis
1821 John Gick
1823 J. T. Thompson
1825 James Horne
1826 George Beard
1826 Theophilus Pugh
1826 John Jenkins
1827 John Crofts
1827 John B. Brownell
1829 John Shaw
1830 Charles Penny
1831 Joseph Talbot
1832 Thomas Lofthouse
1834 Samuel S. Johnson
1835 John Price
1835 James Sharracks
1836 William West
1836 Samuel Simons
1836 James Eacott
1838 John Corlett
1839 Thomas Pearson (B)
1843 John Blackwell
1845 Alex. J. Thompson
1845 William F. Turtle
1847 Isaac Whitehouse
1847 William Williams (3)
1847 John B. Selley
1847 Samuel Annear
1851 Thomas Cannell
1852 William English
1852 James T. Hartwell
1853 Hilton Cheesborough
1853 James Hutchings
1854 Francis Moon
1855 George G. Huxtable
1857 Thomas Bate
1858 James H. Darrell
1861 Thomas Payne
1862 Wm. T. L. Weech, B.A.
1866 Joshua Jordon
1868 Elijah H. Sumner
1868 Joseph S. Prior
1868 Henry Bleby
1869 Richard H. Bleby
1870 George Terry, B.A.
1871 William Jackson (D)
1873 Robert Whittleton
1874 Henry Adams
1876 William F. Bleby
1878 J. C. Richardson
1879 Francis W. Moon
1880 James Jenkin
1880 Jabez Bridge
1883 Joseph Kewley
1883 Eben. Edwards
1883 Fred. C. Wright
1884 Fred. A. Smith
1887 Richard Wormwell
1888 George E. Newton
1889 Thomas Raspass
1891 John Williams (A)
1891 John Keddie
1891 George Lester
1891 Wm. Arthur Bird
1891 G. J. H. Northcroft
1893 James A. Archer
1894 John B. Longden
1894 Franklin J. Blake
1895 Jos. Brindley
1895 Wm. J. P. White
1897 Richard C. Johnson
1897 F. W. Gostick



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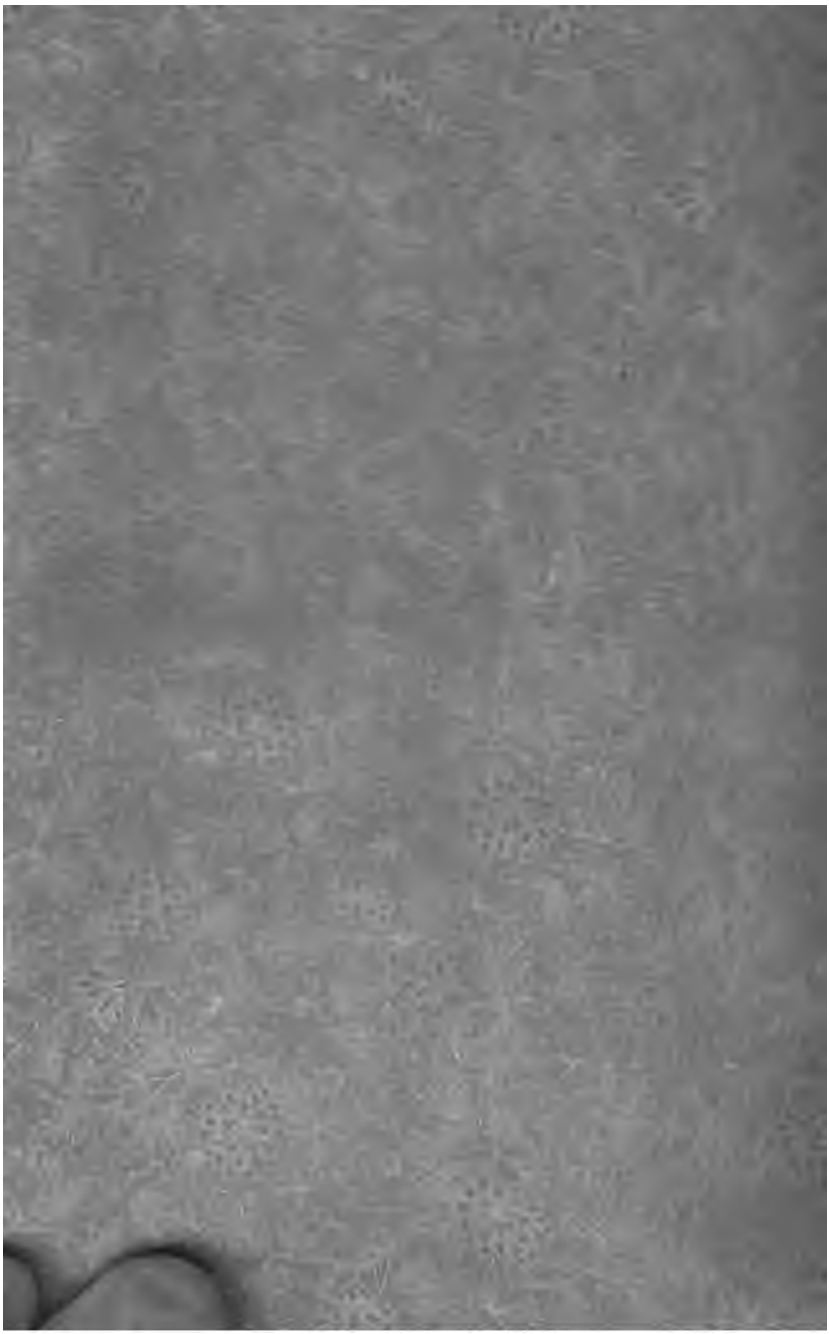
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